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**RASPUTIN:  
PROPHET, LIBERTINE, PLOTTER**



# RASPUTIN

PROPHET, LIBERTINE, PLOTTER

BY

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## AUTHOR'S PREFACE

This little book is just an attempt, based on printed sources (mainly—one might go so far as to say exclusively—Russian newspapers), to convey to non-Russian readers an impression of one of history's most remarkable men. More than an impression, by the nature of its subject, it cannot be; for, so far as I have been able to discover, no biography exists, even in Russian. Moreover, in the newspapers characteristic impressions have been more numerous than articles with dates. The fact is that, though volumes could be written dealing with each of the aspects his character presented—and his life was an endless claim of the most incredible adventures—amazingly little has been written of this man whom the censorship always strenuously protected as long as he lived.

I am fully aware that the present work, on that ground alone, cannot but prove defective, but the interest of the subject seems to me to justify the publication of this little book. The first idea that entered my mind was to weave a romance around this man's life; but actual facts are far more fantastic and exciting, and, to my thinking, of essentially livelier interest than the finest novel, where, among other things, truth is eked out with fabrications, and nobody, in any case, knows where the one ends and the other begins. Nor, from the same point of view, have I drawn from oral sources that might have been at my service.

In the book itself I have only, in certain instances, quoted by name the papers from which particular information has been gathered. For the public at large the sources are certainly devoid of interest, and continual reference to them can only be tiresome. I am content, therefore, with merely mentioning the newspapers from the reports of which I have particularly constructed my book—viz., taken in alpha-

betical order : *Birzchevia Viedomosti* ("Bourse Gazette"), a business organ that belongs politically to the Cadet party; *Dien* ("The Day"), a Radical Jewish organ; *Kolokol* ("The Bell"), organ of the ultra-blackest reaction; *Novoye Vremia* ("New Time"), an old, respectable, somewhat reactionary organ; *Ristsho* ("Speech"), a Radical Jewish organ; *Russiskiye Viedomosti* ("Russian Gazette"); *Russkoye Slovo* ("Russian Word") (N.B.—These two last organs are both moderate, very great and respected—in fact, the papers most read by the educated public); *Utro Russii* ("Russia's Morning"), moderate; and *Vetscherniye Vremia* ("Evening Times"), a somewhat new and unknown paper.

In giving dates the new style is used.

T. VOGEL-JØRGENSEN.



## INTRODUCTION

WHAT the murder of Rasputin means to Russia is as difficult to indicate clearly now as it is to say what his life meant; but it is admitted that no other man in Russia in recent times had an influence which could be compared even remotely with that of Rasputin. And the men who, in his time, possessed any influence were able to exert it only by dint of having this remarkable man at their back.

Remarkable indeed he was. To find his parallel we should have to search through the history of the world for centuries. In him lust of power was, in a unique degree, united with fox-like cunning and a bent for intriguing. Religion was his best weapon; it became foul in his hands. With its aid he obtained by force erotic satisfaction, and then religion and eroticism attained a

higher unity which, in his hands, became a power and a political instrument of the first order. He possessed a knowledge of mankind and worldly wisdom. He turned to account the weaknesses of those about him. His impudence was unbounded. He was supple, and could twist and turn according to circumstances; but what is more, he contrived to make others—all the others—follow his piping, to coil circumstances about them till they became hung up in them. He was the representative—almost the personification—of stagnation, retrogression, mediævalism, and obscurantism, to such a degree that, when we read about this man, we are often driven to believe that we are face to face with an anachronism, that his death occurred a thousand years ago, and that we now call him to mind, and that it is not merely weeks ago that a shot from a revolver stopped the beatings of his black heart.

His death was what death must be after a life such as this man led. His life had been full of struggles with intrigues and

ambushes. Now he himself fell before a shot fired from an ambush. But his life, too, had been uniformly rich in victories, and in death he proved victorious: he forced his adversary, Trepov, the President of the Ministry, out of the game, and representatives of the most unadulterated reaction, in consequence of Rasputin's death, took their seats comfortably on Ministerial benches.

That is the first result of his death, or may be the last result of his life—that life that meant such a frightful check on all development of civilization in this mighty realm. His activities will scarcely be able to stop for long the rapid stream that, by all indications, is overflowing every barrier. When the sluice is once burst, the current will undoubtedly rush forth in mighty torrents and fertilize the New Russia; and then, and then only, shall we be able to behold all that Rasputin's death stood for. Then, too, will historians be in a position to weigh and measure the significance of his life.



## CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
AUTHOR'S PREFACE -	5
INTRODUCTION -	9
I. RASPUTIN'S ORIGIN AND PERSONALITY -	15
II. RASPUTIN'S POWER -	41
III. WHAT HAS BEEN WRITTEN AND SPOKEN ABOUT RASPUTIN -	69
IV. PREVIOUS ATTEMPTS TO MURDER RASPUTIN -	90
V. THE MURDER -	108
VI. AFTER THE MURDER -	129
INDEX -	141



# RASPUTIN: PROPHET, LIBERTINE, PLOTTER

## CHAPTER I

### RASPUTIN'S ORIGIN AND PERSONALITY

RASPUTIN\* was not his real name: he was rightly called Grigori Yefimovitsch. He was born in Petronovskoye, a tiny village in the department of Tobolsk in Siberia, where he also spent the whole of his childhood; but little is known about him during these years—nay, so little is known that nobody could say with certainty how old he

\* Rasputin has an evil sound, as it suggests the adjective *rasputny*, dissolute, profligate, and the substantive *rasputsva*, profligacy. There are, however, kindred words less depraved—*e.g.*, *rasputie*, cross-road, place where roads branch off; and *rasputat*, to unravel, disentangle. For this and much other valuable information the translator is indebted to his friend Mr. F. P. Marchant, the distinguished Slavonic scholar. He has also to express his thanks to Mr. J. W. Frings for his valuable assistance in the laborious task of revising his manuscript.

was. It was commonly asserted that he was forty-three when he died; but he himself certainly thought he was older by half a score of years. Nevertheless, he had no proof to offer in support of this statement.

One may picture his childhood in the frame of the environment in which he grew up, and the habitual associations which stamped their mark on his life.

As a matter of fact, we get through scattered and far from exhaustive information of the country and its conditions a background for judging this man, without which an understanding of him must necessarily be defective.

Tobolsk is a half-deserted flat country that lies round the Altai Mountains. It is infertile and savage. Trees and shrubs are both of sickly growth and stunted, owing to the rough climate. The great *tundras*—those swamps that extend for miles and miles—alternate stony soil and scanty flora. In Tobolsk, besides the genuine Russian Siberians, live also a very large number of nomads—Samoyads of Mongolian origin;

## ORIGIN AND PERSONALITY 17

and Grigori Yefimovitsch's mother must have been one such Samoyad woman, in whose blood and soul lived pagan traditions dating back thousand of years. His father was just a common peasant, no nomad, and had, in no respect, raised himself above the level of his fellows; on the contrary, the family was known as being below the level as regards morality.

His home was as most homes are in this remote wilderness of the world, where civilization is of a low standard; and where civilization is lacking, the primitive instincts get the upper hand.

Attempts are made on the part of the Russian clergy to bring civilization to these regions; again and again priests are sent out. But, often enough, it is not the priests who lay their impress on the lives and morals of the people, but quite the contrary. The battles the priests here wage are more rarely battles for the faith in whose name they wear their garb of office than a battle with boon-companions around the vodka bottle, and with the men in general

about their wives' and daughters' favour, which is not difficult to gain.

Here idols are worshipped, and those frightful grotesque creatures are the only beings the people continue to look up to. And the qualities that are attributed to the gods and deemed virtues are not exactly those which, in civilized communities, are written on the credit side when the moral reckoning is made up. Consequently, these gods, who are smeared all over with reindeer's blood, permit all the excesses that men commit, and these are carried on quite openly.

Grigori Yefimovitsch grew up in surroundings such as these. As a child he attracted no particular attention; he was as the majority of children there. When he was somewhat older he began to be notorious for his brutality, his reckless violence, and his maliciousness combined with remarkable good-humour.

He drank to excess and fought, and even when quite young his lustfulness often debilitated him. Violating women was an

everyday occurrence with Grigori Yefimovitsch. And it was not otherwise when he got married.

His wife was a Tungusian woman whom he is said to have honestly purchased from the nomad tribe to which she belonged; but of her and her relation to his amazing life no one has any further knowledge. He had several children by his marriage, among others a couple of daughters who, later on, figured, now and again, as prominent personages in Petrograd.

Grigori Yefimovitsch was brought up to be a miller. He could not get any customers, for he had learnt nothing about the business. When the peasants came to him with corn, he drank with them instead of grinding their meal. He seemed predestined to end his life in gaol. He was often at loggerheads with the law. He is said to have been punished, besides, on numerous occasions, for rioting in the streets and offences against public morality, also for theft and perjury.

However, after the periods when his

bouts of dissipation had been exceedingly violent, and his excesses had debilitated him, a reaction, as a rule, followed. Then he liked to betake himself to a monastery, and there he spent his time in prayer and repentance, and there he regained strength to return to fresh dissipations.

Nothing definite is anywhere known as to how in the first place he came into connection with monasteries. It is said, in respect of this, that monastic life appealed to him so much because it did not tax his strength. It seems by no means improbable, viewing his temperament as a whole, that in this he found his earliest attraction to the cloister and to the Christianity which all through his life he exploited for his own personal advantage, and by the help of which he wormed his way up into society.

There is hardly any doubt, however, that at a certain period of his life the doctrines of Christianity took a very strong hold of Grigori. As is not uncommon with primitive people and violent and sensuous natures, he was keenly susceptible to all

kinds of mysticism that stimulated his senses. All accounts of him agree in this, that, during the greatest part of his life, he utilized religion, in a thoroughly systematic and cynical way, as a means in his strivings for power. All who knew and have described him are quite agreed that at certain periods he felt himself very strongly affected, but that these periods became more and more infrequent, and little by little his religion became nothing but an outward grimace. There is scarcely a doubt that with him it grew to be nothing but a business affair.

Grigori Yefimovitsch was about thirty years old when he became so strongly impressed by a visit to a monastery that he resolved to become a monk. He underwent a religious crisis that shook his very being. He changed his whole mode of life for a time: turned teetotaller, abandoned smoking and sexual satisfaction. The Siberian monk who had talked with him, and assisted in his conversion, also undertook to teach Grigori reading and writing, a

luxury he had previously ignored. Grigori built a chapel at the mill, and he studied industriously, though with great difficulty. His study was the Bible. All day long he would sit and ponder over the riddles of life, and even at that period that imperious and amazing glint was often kindled in his eyes, which could both shine with the glow of fanaticism and yet seem weary with the dulness that succeeded excessive sensual ecstasy.

And so Grigori Yefimovitsch went forth and preached as a monk. He collected money for religious agencies, and with a glance from his eyes so confused and hypnotized his audience, that, in a semi-conscious ecstasy, they abandoned themselves to him. It was not long before all his efforts as a monk were directed only upon female audiences; and soon afterwards, by means of hypnotic faculties, of the existence of which he had gradually obtained knowledge, he also "healed women of sicknesses." A man who knew Rasputin well personally, and who has collected rich

material about him, assures us that Rasputin's power and influence, altogether irresistible, depended on his extraordinary hypnotic faculty. Moreover, he could speak a vigorous, limpid Russian, through which he often strongly impressed aristocratic circles. His voice was fine, solemn, penetrating, and musical. Undoubtedly, says this man, Rasputin's hypnotic faculties enabled him to heal certain diseases.

He gained renown as a miracle-worker, and with it the first great stride on the journey he was so soon to travel with such amazing rapidity. Whether it was the moneys collected "for religious purposes" that he now applied to himself and his home, we have nowhere any direct information; but we are certainly free to believe it without injury to the dead man's reputation. It is, in any case, admitted that he then increased very considerably the size of his home. Among other things, he had a large residence built for him in Petronovskoye, with many rooms, of which his wife and children had five, while twelve rooms were

occupied by as many "sisters," the eldest of whom was twenty-seven.

His erotic insatiability required a harem, and he set up one in this manner. The "sisters" were religious fanatics who were ready to sacrifice themselves for God. The way this was done by Rasputin's orders was rather uncommon. Abandoning one's self to God mainly consisted in abandoning one's self to the monk. Among other things, the worship consisted of "sacrificial prayers" by which women cleansed themselves of sin. Of these prayer-meetings the inhabitants of Petronovskoye have told the following story:

"At night, when the stars appear in the sky, Rasputin with his household and adherents of both sexes make excursions into the woods. They pile up firewood and kindle a pyre. On a tripod set on the fire is placed a vessel with incense and herbs. Men and women join hands and form a ring round the pyre, dance, and sing continually and monotonously this single verse:

"'Our sin is for repentance' sake,  
For penitence our sin, O God.'

"The dance round the fire grows quicker and quicker, wilder and wilder; sighs and groans are heard; the fire goes out, and, in the ensuing darkness, Rasputin's voice is heard exclaiming: 'Try your flesh.'

"All fling themselves on the ground, then the confusion becomes general, and a shameless orgy begins."

One of Rasputin's female companions—"a sister" and society dame—writes of him as follows:

"I forsook my relatives, to whom I was greatly attached, and I followed Rasputin. Once when I was travelling alone with him in a first-class carriage, and talking to him about God and the salvation of the soul and the resurrection of the dead, he suddenly made a dash at me, began kissing me, and after that . . . he cleansed me of my sins. For the rest of the evening I felt heavy at heart. I turned to Rasputin, and said:

"But, Grigori Yefimovitsch, isn't what we do with you sinful?"

He replied: "No, my daughter, it is no

sin; our flesh is from God, and we can freely employ it."

Finally, here is a story which one of the "sisters" has written about her stay in Rasputin's house, a story which is proof-abundant of her helplessness:

"For a whole half-year I lived in a state of nightmare. I don't know yet whether Father Grigori is a holy man or the greatest sinner in the world. I can abide nowhere in this ill-fated town. I wanted to flee, I wanted to return to Petrograd; but I cannot, for I'm afraid, awfully afraid, of Rasputin. His big grey, piercing eyes cow me, penetrate the very depths of my soul, and inspire me with dread. At a distance of five thousand versts I feel him round me. I feel he is an immoral force, that he is capable of anything and everything."

As a supplement to this very imperfect, yet nevertheless illuminative, personal impression of him, the following information ought to be added:

Rasputin was tall, quite six feet in height; his eyes, which had a wanton, roving expres-

sion and were of an undecided hue, are said to have always been shrouded in a gleam of mysterious appeal. Undoubtedly Rasputin's remarkable resemblance to the traditional representations of Christ (which proved very effective) was the result of careful cultivation on his part. His long, slender hands astonished those who remembered how he had been brought up, even if they were not well cared for. Like his habits, his dress was simple. Nobody ever saw him in anything but the rough frieze coat that is commonly worn by Russian peasants, and he wore nothing different at Court. Rasputin was Rasputin, just as Mohammedans believe that Allah is Allah the Unchangeable. This constancy is one feature among his many characteristics which bear witness to the thoroughness with which he went to work, the minute care he took in getting up the part he was about to play. And all the traits we know of him show him, first and foremost, as one possessing a vast knowledge of human nature, who discovered the Philosopher's Stone so

far as he saw that mankind in general is much more primitive than the majority of them are aware, and even they themselves believe. He used his wits on women and men, though more especially on the former, and it was always they who came off worst.

Never, I suppose, will it be settled how much his personality was the expression of faith, excitement, and rapture with its attendant ecstasies; how much was shrewd calculation and the sheer result of his hankering after power; how much was unbridled lust.

Scarcely anybody was clear as to whether he was either a shrewdly calculating man or possibly a man of a genuinely upright character, self-conscious, or perhaps even to himself an intricate psychological labyrinth. Yet he understood in an extraordinary and almost perfect manner the art of concealing all the processes of his will and wishes, and the mazes of his aims and ends before anyone had wandered through them. And even at this particular period it was often difficult to understand him or

make him out, because he had so blinded the eyes, deafened the ears, and clouded the brain, of those he had in his toils, that their knowledge became defective and their judgment untrustworthy through their faculty of observation failing them.

This home where he lived surrounded by a horde of women was the centre of his activities, which through his frequent journeys extended far and wide.

In these years he carried on his work chiefly at Kasan, Samara, and Kiev, everywhere gathering enthusiastic followers, everywhere the subject of unbounded worship and idolatry. At the same time, it must be admitted, his enemies became more and more numerous. But still they were scattered, and, what is more, those who ought to have had their eyes most open were the most blind.

A lady at Kasan has, in a letter to the then Archimandrite Theofan, described some of Rasputin's enormities, and brought the most violent charges against him; but they had no effect. The Archimandrite was

likewise blinded. It was none other than he who, later on, brought Rasputin to Petrograd, and took him under his protection. The lady in question wrote, among other things: "It happened one day that I saw Rasputin in the street, coming from a bath-house with my two daughters, one of whom was sixteen and the other twenty. A wild dread seized me. I knew what that meant, so I stopped, but not a word could I utter.

"Then said Grigori to my daughters:

"Behold, the light of salvation is also arising for her."

And, later on, in a letter to Theofan, she complains of him in strong language:

"I do not understand how your Holiness can continue your acquaintance with this Grigori Rasputin. He is a devil; his deeds foreshadow the advent of Antichrist."

For a long time Theofan refused to listen to any charges brought against Rasputin; but at length wrath against him became so intense that not even his followers' readiness to go through fire and water for him could

avail, and the Archimandrite was forced to investigate the charges. A court was appointed to undertake a strict inquiry into Rasputin's evil deeds. A Bishop, a monk, and three laymen of high standing, sat in judgment, before whom Grigori appeared, and he "proved" his innocence, whereupon the court acquitted him, and he left, cleansed by this purgatorial fire, stronger than ever. We know of other occasions in Russia where courts of law, even special juries, have been so "packed" that the verdict was a foregone conclusion. We know, too, of occasions when the highest Judges on the Bench have been guilty of a corruption that would seem incredible. If we may believe what is as clear as noon-day, we may assume that a court of law such as that just mentioned, and others like it, which afterwards had Rasputin's affairs to deal with, was packed in such a way that its findings were only what were desired. This may well be taken for granted, even if the proofs are not actually forthcoming.

But whatever the verdict reached by the

court was, Rasputin's position was greatly strengthened, and there was then no end to the marks of distinction conferred on him when he arrived at a town. He was treated as a person of the highest position; he rose; his influence increased; he aimed at a high mark.

Grigori Yefimovitsch had changed his name; he called himself Rasputin. This name signifies partly the very sensually inclined, the libertine, the dissipated one; partly it means the unconquerable one. He wanted to hypnotize with his name before he came on the scene.

And he succeeded very quickly in hypnotizing the set in Petrograd that he entered —the set that was grouped about the Court.

In order to understand how it came about that this ignorant, uncultured monk contrived to push his way up to the Russian Court, one must bear in mind that the Tsar and Tsarina, unfortunately for themselves, had for years past been constantly harbouring a succession of mystical monks and

## ORIGIN AND PERSONALITY 33

medicine-men at their Court, where these fellows exercised very considerable influence, though none in the same degree as Rasputin, who thoroughly understood the art of usurping power and keeping it.

Even under Tsar Alexander I., Fotscha, a very commonplace monk, played an important part in the Tsar's apartments, both in his private ones and those set apart for the affairs of state. It was, however, during the reign of Nicholas Alexandrovitsch that sorcerers first got the upper hand. In the course of time there were a multitude of them. And what chiefly encouraged these seekers after power was the fact that the Tsar, it is pretty certain, was a very strong believer in spiritism.

Many stories are extant of the Tsar's fondness for spiritistic séances, and nobody will be surprised that the men he imported to hold séances made the spirits appear on their own account when these mighty ones deceased—it was always, or nearly always, dead and gone Russian Princes who reappeared—could be of service to them. It is

not surprising, therefore, that these miracle-mongers through whom the spirits—whose advice and biddings the Tsar followed—spoke, were the medium of blackmailing, communications, attempts at corruption, snobbery, grovelling, and threats *ad infinitum*.

About the time, when the Russo-Japanese War broke out, the Tsar had for his private confessor a French monk, Abbot Philippe, who finally, after many conflicts with Plehve, the Premier, was arrested. It was not long, however, before another took his place.

The Tsar had found by experience that Buddhists possessed occult faculties in a remarkable degree.

From his birth the Tsarovitch, the little Crown Prince, was frequently so dangerously ill that fears were entertained for his life. The Tsar sent for a monk from a monastery in Thibet, and the latter was lucky enough to cure the Tsarovitsch Alexis, or, anyhow, brought about an improvement in his state of health.

But this monk had not the wit to cultivate the friendship of the Countess Ignatiev, one of the most influential ladies at the Russian Court, and she, through the Tsar's sister, the Grand Duchess Elizabeth, aroused so much suspicion against this monk that he at last took himself off, and was sent back to Thibet. After him the monk Illiodor, (about whom we shall have something to tell later on) was, for a short time, the confidant; but his star, too, soon set.

Grigori Yefimovitsch had come to Petrograd.

In 1903 Bishop Theofan, the Archimandrite, had been to Tobolsk, and there seen Grigori. He observed his marvellous faculties for winning the children of this world to God's teaching, and even then Theofan worked hard to get him to Petrograd. A well-known ecclesiastic of high standing—the late Father John of Cronstadt—had met Grigori, and was singularly impressed by his deep faith and the fervent glow of his preaching. He gave Grigori many letters of introduction to well-

known and aristocratic circles in Petrograd, whither he was anxious that this new power in the Church should go.

This took place ultimately in 1905.

Rasputin had not been long in Petrograd, where he was intent on pushing his way, before he chanced to meet a rich and prominent lady, the widow of Boschmakov the millionaire, and it was she who guided his first steps in society.

She was much infatuated with him, as were all the women he met. High-placed and elegant ladies were actually paralyzed with raptures over this peasant, who is said to have been, in a quite exceptional degree, dirty and unkempt; who retained his boorish habits, as, for instance, eating with his fingers—a habit that gradually became a coquetry. He never gave it up even in drawing-rooms, just as, in no other respect, did he allow himself to be influenced by the civilization with which he was surrounded. He also saw, perhaps, how this peculiarity of his gave him an additional interest in the eyes of the ladies. These women in shoals

everywhere submitted absolutely to his will. When he wished it, they did his errands.

This appears strange, even if his hypnotic powers were considerable; but it is understandable when one hears what was the kernel of his whole religion, what was the mainspring of the divine faith he preached and hypnotized people into accepting. A passage is quoted, the utterance of a woman who, as regards their immoral cohabitation, uses the expression that Rasputin "cleansed her of her sin." This, too, is only to be fully understood when one hears that the whole of his religion was comprised in the following passage, the artful simplicity of which is so sublime that it could not fail to prove effective:

"I bear within me a part of the Highest Being, and through me alone can salvation be attained. For its sake it is necessary to be united with me in soul and body. All that proceeds from me is a source of light, and cleanses from sin."

Thus we understand better why this

handsome but repulsive Siberian *moujik* got his will of all women. It is, moreover, an agelong and widespread fact that women have tremendous difficulty in combating erotic religiosity or religious eroticism. Rasputin has given it a new impulse.

For Rasputin it was all calculation. His ambition was boundless; and crafty as this fellow was in a remarkable degree, he quickly saw where he had to scheme to reach the Court, which was his sole aim.

He made a thorough conquest of the inflammable and frivolous Countess Ignatiev. She became his slave, through her he worked, and this ceased only with his death. In this case, however, there is little doubt that the usual conditions were reversed. It was not Countess Ignatiev who protected Rasputin, but he who took her under the protecting folds of his cloak. In return she did him a number of services. The relations between them were in all respects the most intimate possible.

It was in 1905, then, that Countess Ignatiev got Rasputin pushed on to the

Court. The Grand Duke Sergius, the husband of the Grand Duchess Elizabeth, was murdered, and the distracted state into which this murder threw his consort rendered her an easy victim to Rasputin, whom Countess Ignatiev sent her for consolation and solace. And these two women together carried his fame to the Court, and there he was at length received.

Ere this the Tsarina had an earlier Okhrana agent—a Swede who, under the assumed name of Zanka,\* wrote a book

\* Hermann Theodor von Zanka himself explains in a preface that his name is an assumed one, and that he had held an appointment in the Okhrana, the Russian Secret Police. How far this is correct it is, of course, impossible to say for certain. One part seems to tally with it inasmuch as, in many trifling matters, he reveals a knowledge of Russian private affairs which, on many grounds, cannot be altogether fiction. On the other hand, an objection can be raised that his explanations do not sound quite trustworthy when one sees behind the lines in the Introduction: "I have no wish to expose myself to the persecutions of the Russian police, to which undoubtedly I should be exposed in the event of their finding out who Hermann Theodor von Zanka really is. . . ." People will say that, had he been an agent of the Okhrana, the chief of that body

entitled "Rasputin: Society's Woman System in Russia, and the Events of the World." On several occasions he visited Rasputin.

Of his arrival at the Court of the Tsar, Rasputin could, without exaggeration, use the haughty but now hackneyed words with which Cæsar proclaimed his victory over King Parnaces at Zela: *Veni, vidi, vici.*

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would, on reading the book, pretty soon know who Hermann Theodor von Zanka was. And, he tells us later on that it is not only the ordinary Russian police, but also the agents of the Okhrana, von Zanka fears. Therefore, to be on the safe side, none of von Zanka's information is quoted here without special reference to the source, or the few occasions where it is found absolutely requisite for the purpose to quote his explanations.

## CHAPTER II

### RASPUTIN'S POWER

IT was a critical time for Russia when Rasputin reached the Court. The Japanese War was in progress. Again and again there were revolutions on a larger or smaller scale. Just when he came, a fierce insurrection was rolling its heavy billows through the kingdom. The Imperial couple felt themselves menaced. If they went out they might expect a bomb; indoors the Tsar and Tsarina would often enough find threatening letters in their most private apartments, especially from the secret police who play a curious double part—at one time opposing anarchy in its many forms, at another time in the service of anarchy, opposing reaction. In these letters there were threats against their lives, and the presence of these letters in the rooms daily

frequented by the Tsar and Tsarina, their children and most trusted attendants, was proof-positive that if their enemies wished it, the days of the royal pair were indeed numbered.

It is, therefore, not surprising that the Tsarina was nervous, and suffered from a very acute depression of spirit, which increased when the Tsarovitch, who was born in 1904, fell sick unto death. And then came Rasputin. He was appointed "health bedesman" to the Court; and his prayers availed: the Revolution was suppressed, and the Tsarovitch recovered.

Various rumours have been afloat as to the illness of little Alexis, the Tsarovitch, and Rasputin's relations to it. Rumours, which were often ill-natured, have whispered the most amazing things; but they are only rumours which have nowhere been substantiated. It suffices to bear in mind the fact that when Rasputin shortly afterwards left the Court to go on a journey, the Tsarovitch fell sick again.

This and similar obvious instances—in

which, perhaps, lay more imagination than reality—of Moujik Rasputin's mighty power soon made him altogether indispensable.

It was easy, too, for one who had, besides, such results to show in other matters, to gain the ear of the Tsar. The Tsar followed blindly this man's lead, whose inspiration obviously was derived from the Powers Above, and, when the Heavenly Powers likewise mixed themselves up with ecclesiastical politics—ah! and even, later on, on the largest scale, in General, Home, and Foreign politics—it was only natural that proper respect should be shown to the representative of the Powers without whom all is nought.

It was not long before Rasputin—the man behind the Government—held all the strings in his hands. And when he pulled the strings all the puppets danced.

This was seen first in ecclesiastical affairs, in which, at the outset, he felt himself most at home. One of the most typical of his achievements was the nomination

of Varnarva—a journeyman gardener and friend of his childhood—to a bishopric.

Like Rasputin himself, Varnarva was taken with a fit of religion. Rasputin knew it, and nominated him a priest. Later on, he rose in the Church, and one fine day he got appointed Bishop of his native place, Tobolsk, and at Rasputin's death this ignorant man, who could neither read nor write, still held this high ecclesiastical office.

The Holy Synod in Petrograd had no longer any power. One day it was reported that Varnarva had canonized a lately deceased priest of his acquaintance. Another story goes that it was a Siberian monk of the fifteenth century. But the first version sounds most undeniably probable, on the sole grounds that one could hardly suspect His Sublime Reverence Bishop Varnarva of possessing so minute an acquaintance with history as to know the name of a monk who lived some four hundred years ago. The Holy Synod protested against this trespassing on its and

the Tsar's privileges. (N.B.—It is the Synod that proposes for canonization and the Tsar who actually canonizes.) Samarin—the General Procurator of the Synod, the former Marshal of the Nobility of Moscow, and the premier nobleman of Russia—had Bishop Varnarva summoned to Petrograd.

Varnarva, after long delay, obeyed the summons; but Rasputin had arranged it all by then. The latter had taken good care that Varnarva should not be sent to live in a monastery, for nobody could ever know what might be done there; but he got a set of rooms in the house of one of the leading ladies in Petrograd, who was very intimate with the Tsarina. He had likewise, in the very middle of the trial—Samarin was holding on Varnarva—taken good care that Samarin should be dismissed. Samarin had to quit Petrograd immediately. A few days afterwards Varnarva also returned home to Tobolsk, and the "canonized monk" remained a saint. The Holy Synod obediently and complacently gave its consent. If it had withheld it, the Synod,

too, would, of course, have been simply dismissed.

In 1909, however, so many complaints were lodged against Rasputin—complaints substantiated with proofs of such a nature that they could not be committed to paper, and if they were written, nobody would believe them—that the Archimandrite, Bishop Theofan, felt himself obliged to take proceedings in earnest. Rasputin was once more brought before an ecclesiastical court, and this time condemned. He had to quit Petrograd.

Theofan did succeed, in spite of strong influences, in getting Rasputin to go; but the monk's friends and followers—more particularly Illiodor, a priest and monk—made enormous efforts to get him back again. Illiodor, in a letter to the Tsar in which he expressed his indignation at this man being banished from the Court and Petrograd, called him "the greatest spirit of the Russian Church at this instant."

And when Rasputin himself wrote to the Tsar, from the monastery where he

was doing penance, that his spiritual daughters and followers could not live without him, the Tsar recalled him in haste.

Then Bishop Theofan was made to feel Rasputin's power. "Grishka,"\* as Rasputin was called contemptuously by the great multitude who, in many ways, experienced his powers of oppression, had Theofan dismissed and exiled to Siberia.

And then Rasputin was once more at work in his arbitrary, high-handed way. Besides Theofan and Samarin, he also got dismissed S. M. Lukianow, later Solicitor-General to the Holy Synod. He also procured the elevation of Barnabas, a highly unpopular bishop. Rasputin feared Illidor's influence at Court, among other things, and intrigued against him and had him removed from the Court circles and cast out into the cold of disgrace.

After Rasputin's death it was not publicly stated, though it cannot be denied, that

\* Grishka, a rather contemptuous diminution of Grigori (=Gregory). For this explanation the translator is indebted to Mr. F. P. Marchant.

he was very active during the Beilis law-suit at Kiev. A fellow such as Rasputin was, of course, bound to be a Jew-hater, and what was done from the highest places was partly to get Beilis found guilty. When this seemed hopeless, an attempt was made, in the most insidious way, to get the jury to return a verdict that opened the possibility, later on, of a fresh trial on the charge of ritual murder. In all that was done Rasputin, no doubt, was deeply implicated. From the time previous to the beginning of the Petrograd era he was well known at Kiev, where he was then busy working the oracle through his blind dupes. And for many other dirty works which are part and parcel of Russian history, it is this man we have to thank.

But, for the second time, he was successfully got rid of for a little while. Illiodor, who did not lack influence, was often neglected by Rasputin. It cannot be wondered at that Illiodor was finally to be found amongst Rasputin's opponents. And Illiodor had the honour of the next removal

of the *moujik*, even if it was Bishop Hermogen who started the actual proceedings.

This time the gravamen of the charge was that Grigori Rasputin had visited public bathing establishments, in company with women of the highest circles, together with whom he had, without the slightest embarrassment, bathed, not troubling himself about the others in the bath being women.

This was nothing extraordinary,\* and

\* There are many accounts of these bath scenes, which, although, to some extent, they are in some contradiction to the accounts of Rasputin's personal filthiness, yet must anyhow certainly have some foundation. Von Zanka, after saying that all Rasputin's lady friends were very well known to the Secret Police, gives a description of one such scene at the baths: "One day in November, 1911, when snow lay on the streets—which is unusual in Petrograd—a whole line of sleighs were making for a little street in the northern part of Petrograd—M-skaya Uliza, a quiet little neglected street in which there is not much traffic. It is rather antiquated, and does not look as if the houses in it had been repaired or painted for twenty years. In one of these quiet little houses lived at that time a middle-aged lady from Marseilles, who was generally known by the name of Madame Discrétion, and was very intimate

although Rasputin had always previously poohpoohed such charges by explaining that he did this "to try his flesh"—an excuse that, up to then, had never failed—on this occasion neither his impudence nor his influence carried the day. He was banished—but, as a matter of course, came back shortly afterwards.

And so he began again. He was the dragon on whom seven new heads grew

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with the once famous Madame Esthère. With her house for their destination, as we have said before, one cold winter's evening drove five sleighs, each conveying a lady—viz., Princess T——v, Countess L——v, Miss D——kov, Mrs. X, who had been recently converted to the Orthodox Church, whom we may call Silberstein, and Mrs. M——sky, married to Count M——, a member of the Senate and Traffic Minister, etc. Madame Discrétion possesses, besides several other conveniences, a very elegant bath-house. All, of course, know what a Russian bath-house looks like, but this one is furnished most luxuriously, and Madame has not spared money in any direction. Seen from the outside it is very dark in Madame Discrétion's apartments, but that is a mere optical delusion. It is most hospitably warm and lighted within. The five ladies step out of their sleighs in the neighbourhood of M—skaya Uliza, and send their drivers home to meet outside different churches, so

for everyone that was chopped off. Every blow aimed at this man served but to strengthen his position with the Tsar and the populace in general. He knew well how to excite the imagination, like the martyrs who suffered guiltlessly, suffered for God, and, as the blood of the martyrs was the seed of the Church—*sanguis martyrum semen ecclesiae*—attacks on Rasputin only increased his power and influence.

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as to fetch the ladies after they have performed their evening devotions. Madame Discrétion receives them in silence, without a word, without a smile, only with a low bow. The ladies are conducted to the bath-house. Grigori Yefimovitsch is already there. It is very hot inside, quite 104 degrees Fahrenheit. When Father Grishka sees his faithful assembled he begins to preach. He speaks with considerable animation, for, as we have said before, it is very hot, and Father Grishka has much with which his tender-loving heart is brimming over. Father Grishka gesticulates and bellows, because his ecstasy is approaching. In glowing colours he paints the lures of sin and the bane of the flesh. His audience hangs with burning eyes on his lips, and, as we have said before, it is very hot. Their pulses throb, and the heat makes the faithful almost faint; but the preacher becomes still more excited by the awful temperature. Still more vividly he depicts how all

He deposed priests by scores, appointed others—in many cases ex-criminals who were in no connection whatsoever with the Church—dismissed and appointed professors of the highest educational institutes; censored books, newspapers, and plays. Among other things, he prohibited the performance of Leonid Andreyev's play "Anathema," and this raised a great stir.

Little by little he began to transfer

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mankind, without exception, is fallen a prey to sin and vice and crimes. Even the best are, in God's sight, nothing but reprobates abounding in vices, whose sins stink before heaven. The congregation is soon bewitched by this glowing eloquence. It sighs and groans in repentance under his spell. The prophet's eyes are aflame. Ah ! vice is dreadful, and the flesh is enemy to the spirit. Why has God in His wisdom made the temptations of the flesh irresistible ? The audience cannot answer. The temperature rises, and the people are in a corresponding condition of fervour on account of the heat and Father Grishka's burning words. But if the sin is great, yet vastly much greater is the sinner's forgiveness. When he reaches this point, Father Grishka is in a state of ecstasy; his voice sticks fast to his throat; he talks with his tongue. The audience snorts and gasps while the heat becomes more intense in the place. . . .

officials who proved troublesome to him, and, on seeing that process succeeded, he quietly got rid of them, and their dismissals were ratified. A succession of Governors had to kow-tow to the "wizard from Tobolsk." Finally, he interfered about as much as it was possible to do in the Government itself. Among other things, as time went on, various Ministers of State had, thanks to Rasputin, to bite the dust. He was directly or indirectly at the back of nearly all the crises that often shook Russia to her very foundations. In his time he stirred up, for instance, the matters closely connected with the great sensation of Home Secretary Bhumkorsky's retirement.

The free scope he exercised was due solely to the influence he soon acquired over the Tsar. His will became thereby synonymous with the Tsar's will, and in the circles in which Rasputin moved, everyone bowed down before the autocrat's behests.

He had a strenuous and active opponent in the Tsarina Dagmar, who hated him.

She had cause, you know, to see at close quarters all the demoralization in Rasputin's system, and never allowed herself to be hoodwinked by this monk, who aroused her disgust and loathing, and whose dangerousness she perceived.

But Rasputin's might waxed the greater in spite of all attacks.

His antechamber was more sought than the Home Secretary's. All who were desirous to obtain something first tried to see Rasputin and gain his good graces. It was common knowledge that one of his "scraps of paper"—he wrote as a rule, not on ordinary note-paper, but on any bit of paper that happened to be handy—was like the magic word ~~SESAME~~: it opened all doors.

These scraps of paper were, as a rule, couched in the lapidary style: "Grigori orders it." Simple as they might sound, yet such a "scrap" gave, to be sure, an extremely wide scope when it was left to the petitioner himself to point out what it was that Grigori meant. Another by

no means infrequent "scrap" to a Secretary ran thus:

"Dear friend, pay this beautiful actress 500 roubles. God will repay you.—Yours, RASPUTIN."

And, as a matter of course, she got the money.

Now, all that Rasputin undertook was by no means confined to friendly services. It was simply business, and this business had, however, gradually made him a very well-to-do man. Quite as a matter of course when he had the arrangement of an affair, no matter of what sort, he took a liberal commission on it.

The hundreds who sought him in order to get his recommendation for a post, a concession, or for securing a pardon or anything similar, got unhesitatingly—without any examination of the matter—the same answer:

"It may be arranged."

And so he mentioned his price for it. For smaller affairs it ranged from one to two

thousand roubles; but, for affairs of greater magnitude, it was many times as much. And, as we have said before, it was only very rarely indeed that any of Rasputin's "scraps" failed to have the desired effect.

Ministerial influence was, to be sure, of no avail unless the Ministers had the Tsar's ear—and that could be "done only through the monk who always managed to put obstacles in the way of anything initiated without him. The Ministers thus became dependent on him, which was actually the case.

It is said that Count Witte, once upon a time, had to reckon with Rasputin, who was called "Witte's Medium"; and, what is more, when Witte was taken altogether into favour after his unfortunate Peace Negotiations at Portsmouth, people suggested that this was due to Rasputin. This allegation, however, has, on the other hand, been questioned.

But how common it was for Rasputin's orders to be, in all respects, autocratic, is even, if indirectly, nevertheless exceedingly

clear from the fact that Tschelnokov, President of the Municipal League, expressly and with manifest pride calls attention, in *V. Vremia*, to one occasion when he defied the Court snake's might.

"One day a lady visited me," says Tschelnokov, "and told me to do something to get her son, who was about to be drafted for military service, taken into the service of the League. She brought out Rasputin's visiting-card, on which was some scrawl, the purport of which was, roughly, that Grigori Rasputin commanded me to grant the lady's request.

"'Who's this Grigori Rasputin?' said I.

"'What, don't you know Rasputin?' exclaimed the lady, absolutely astonished. 'Why, the whole of Russia knows him!'

"'I do not know any Rasputin; and you ought to be ashamed to come and implore me to aid and abet you in exempting your son from serving in the war,' replied Tschelnokov."

A previous Minister for Agriculture has given another very striking instance of the

respect and fear generally felt for Rasputin, in a characteristic picture of the confusion that ensued in a certain department when Rasputin presented himself. "I did not understand immediately the magic word 'Rasputin,' and thought that people exaggerated; but when I noticed that nearly all the staff of the Ministry were assembled in my office, and nobody knew what to do, and all whispered: 'In Christ's Name, admit Rasputin!'-when I saw and heard that, then I understood who Rasputin was! One person, and one only, could by his mere presence frighten the whole of the Ministry."

And, as a matter of course, Rasputin likewise used his power in other ways to make profits for himself. He was, among other things, the holder of large shares in many important undertakings which always liked to see him as a shareholder. And this because it was known that that particular company, or, anyhow, branch, was one of importance, and, what is more, with strong favouritism at its back. In that way, Ras-

putin's sphere of interest extended, among other things, to questions of Customs, commercial treaties, etc. And thus his meddling and interference gradually trespassed, so to speak, on every domain.

Of course the war greatly disturbed many of his interests.

There are many stories afloat about Rasputin having been a pacifist. Among other things, there was one of an earlier Russian diplomatist who said it was admitted that Rasputin as far back as the Balkan crisis prevented Russia from declaring war against Austria and Hungary.

Especially during the present war the part played by Rasputin was extraordinarily great, even if his name was seldom mentioned by the Press, which was often forbidden. It has actually been asserted that Rasputin would have prevented this war if he had not been absent when it broke out. There is hardly a doubt that he would have tried to do so.

Later on, according to accounts that tally, he laboured very energetically for

a separate peace with Germany. Stürmer, who was very much in Rasputin's leading-strings, and, in spite of his Liberalism, nevertheless most frequently—probably at Rasputin's instigation—played the lackey to the Reactionaries, must have been equally disposed to it. In any case, he was apparently willing to conclude peace as soon as possible, and on the conditions that were obtainable at that time. It is only a little coterie with the highest aristocracy at its head that wanted a separate peace—a little coterie of Reactionaries who, however, at no time could, in this domain, have achieved their refractory desire.

Rasputin himself is mentioned as being a strong Pro-German. It is reported that, among other things, he had considerable property invested in German securities. This affords a very plausible explanation forthwith for his wishes for a separate peace.

The question of the friendly attitude of this little clique of leading men to Germany has been hotly debated. It was during the first day's debate in the Imperial Duma,

in the autumn Session, on November 14, 1916, that it was quite publicly brought to light—viz., in a speech of the Commander of the Cadets, Pavel Nicolaievitsch Miliukov, Professor of History, and an intelligent and independent politician. He hoped, moreover, by this speech to overthrow Stürmer and to pave his own way to the Premiership. The first was successful; the second failed.

Likewise *Le Temps'* foreign correspondent (who in succession to the celebrated Maerkel in *Le Journal National* is very conversant with affairs in the Russian Governmental cliques) hinted at and treated the question.

Professor Miliukov called to mind in this speech (which was only partly published) on December 12, after Stürmer had resigned, and his Traffic Minister Trepov had succeeded him as Premier, the proceedings instituted against Suchomlinov, the Minister for War, whom the country regarded as a traitor. It was said that, by an understanding with Germany, he had failed to

provide for the equipment of the army on an extensive scale.

And, moreover, he said:

"Only a year ago Suchomlinov was brought before a judge for trial, and it was regarded as imperative to dismiss the unpopular Ministers before the Imperial Dumas began. Now this number of such unpopular Ministers is increased by a fresh member!"

The new member was Protopopov, who, no doubt, at Rasputin's instigation, had been appointed Home Secretary. He was a violent Reactionary and one of Rasputin's staunchest henchmen.

Miliukov then reminded them in his speech of a resolution passed at a Zemstvo Congress Meeting\* in Moscow in October, 1916, which ran thus: "The painful suspicion that traitors are plotting to deliver us over to the enemy, that dark forces working in the interests of Germany are threatening

\* Zemstvos are suggestions for the government of communes. These, as a rule, were against Rasputin, wherefore he and the Reactionaries molested them in every possible way.

the Kingdom and negotiating a shameful peace, must now give way to the recognition that a secret and hostile hand is tampering with the machinery of the State. From this, too, must follow the thought that the Government has nothing more to hope for from continuing the war and regards a separate peace as absolutely necessary."

From this resolution there is absolutely no doubt that the allusion was to Rasputin and his tools: Stürmer, Stürmer's Secretary Manussevitsch-Manuilov (whose political merits sometimes seemed as fantastic as Rasputin's), Prince Andrasikov; and the Metropolitan Pitzim.

And so with burning eloquence Miliukov continued his fiery attacks, which really were the most malignant and best arranged attacks on the Rasputin régime that had, up to then, been forthcoming.

And Miliukov ended his speech with consummate eloquence by pointing out that there was a lady well known in political drawing-rooms (the allusion was to one of Rasputin's lady friends) who had caused

a scandal in Paris by her Pro-Germanism and that she it was who had launched Stürmer on his diplomatic career.

During the ensuing ten days a bitter battle was waged behind the scenes: Was Stürmer to go or not ? And Protopopov ? Rasputin wanted to keep him. So, too, did the Tsar, but the Duma and Senate wanted him dismissed. And Stürmer went on November 24, but overwhelmed with marks of honour. Protopopov retained his seat, but fell sick. He did not, *pro tem.*, put in an appearance at the Dumas or Ministry, where he used daily to come and confer with Rasputin, who, as the active leader of Reaction, had to keep Trepov, the now Promier, in order. Trepov was far from nourishing kindly feelings as regards Reaction. It involved serious difficulties to get him to retain Protopopov in the Cabinet. But Rasputin, however, managed it.

Then followed several days of fierce strife between Trepov and Rasputin. Trepov made a move which he thought might check-

mate Rasputin. He published Miliukov's speech, that had been suppressed till then. It was December 12. Then the struggle began to grow bitter. Rasputin feared that Trepov would attain power, and, for that reason, he wanted him—in any case, for a time—to be out of power; and he therefore inflamed the Reactionary elements in the Cabinet against Trepov. The Reactionaries were in the majority, and they were then making their influence felt. An order was issued forbidding the holding of a Zemstvo Congress in Moscow. Interpellation on the subject was not allowed to be made in the Duma. Several lawsuits against two leaders of the Reaction were set back. It was always Rasputin who was behind all this, and indignation against him increased, and this, among other things, turned the scale in a speech made by the Ultra Conservative Parischkevitsch on December 27.

"It is," said he, "a scandal that these dark forces—they are the real root of the evil—are allowed continually to recommend

and appoint persons (with whom they disport themselves as with marionettes at a theatre) to places which they have not the ability to fill, and where they have nothing to do.

"These dark forces emanate from Rasputin. It is now incumbent on both the Duma and the Senate to make their voices heard, and to speak of the evil that threatens Russia's existence. . . . The State is shaken from its foundations. . . . Rasputin is, under these circumstances, much more dangerous than Demetrides\* at

\* Demetrides, who is here alluded to, had, as already stated, exercised for a long time considerable influence at Court. He came from Bulgaria to Petrograd in 1911, and the power he possessed may be explained by his holding spiritistic séances. It must therefore have been he, according to Von Zanka, who with Countess Ignatiev for medium caused the spirit of Alexander II. to appear to the Tsar and say what he should do on such an occasion or other. It is stated that he was somewhat to blame for the Balkan crisis, and is said to have very cunningly made Alexander II. advise the Tsar that Russia ought to take part in it. We know, of course, that it is asserted that the Tsar puts an extraordinary reliance in the actions he was told to perform what

one time was. Gentlemen, for our country's sake we must go directly to the Tsar, throw ourselves at his feet, and beseech him that Russia may be freed from Rasputin and all the dark forces, small and great, however lofty be the places they occupy. The men who sway the destinies of Russia ought not to be such as betray Russia and are intent only on their own selfish ends. The infamy under which we live and suffer

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he calls in the name of Alexander II. Von Zanka writes furthermore: "One night we—that is, Vladimir Alexandrovitsch and I, together with a third person called Uzov—swooped down on him like a hawk and paid a surprise domiciliary visit to Demetrides. He was found in possession, among other things, of a complete outfit for evoking the spirit of Alexander II. in visible form—viz., a mask, different chemical preparations, together with clothes. He had, besides, an ingenious little apparatus, the like of which I have never seen before or since, and by which, by only pressing a spring, can produce sounds which resemble dull blows on a table or a wooden wall. The apparatus was small, and could be carried in a pocket—nay, even held concealed in the hand. Since then Alexander has not pronounced anything on political questions." Not long afterwards Demetrides was banished from the country.

must cease—the infamy that Rasputin's nominations put the most corrupt subjects in the highest offices."

Two days after this speech was delivered Rasputin was murdered; and, so far as we know, it was just this speech that was one of the most effective in bringing about this murder.

And shortly after the murder Trepov fell. But of these events we will treat later on.

## CHAPTER III

### WHAT HAS BEEN WRITTEN AND SPOKEN ABOUT RASPUTIN

As we have already stated, it is certain that, during the last years, more has been written and spoken in Russia about Rasputin than about any other man in Russia.

After his death obituary notices have appeared from persons who have known him; many Russian newspapers have issued reflections on the epoch in Russian history that ended with this man's death, and in the Duma—as we have several times mentioned—violent attacks have been directed at him.

From all quarters he is fiercely condemned. The fact that the Tsar's favourite, Russia's most powerful man, is so judged actually in Russia, when the censorship has always defended him, is significant.

Strongly characteristic features are likewise included in these articles and speeches. It will therefore be of interest to quote extracts here from some of these public utterances about the dead magician.

A well-known Russian author and journalist—L. Lvov—who is a member of the Duma, is reputed to be one of the greatest geniuses and finest orators in this very eloquent assembly. He is clear, concise, and delicately satirical in his style, and, for that reason, feared both as a speaker and a writer. He describes in *Retch* how he twice met “the Old ‘Un,” which is one of the many nicknames Rasputin bore.

The first occasion that Lvov was invited to meet Rasputin was at the end of 1915, at Prince Guranov’s. “The monk sat at a big table, surrounded by a distinguished company. He was clad in his characteristic garb; his eyes had a look of concentration; he kept his silence for the most part, but, when he did speak, it was only to utter some vulgar sentence or other or disconnected words. His dress and his whole personality

was vulgar almost to the point of affectation. He was gnawing apples, etc."

Later on, the guest of honour moved to the drawing-room and then sat on the sofa with the ladies, where he behaved in a more than free-and-easy fashion. In vain, says Lvov, I looked for the enigmatical gleam in his eyes which rumour credits him with. In his eyes were reflected the powerful craft and cunning of the *moujik*—one saw a man who, to an extraordinary extent, knew how to adapt himself to his position, and understood how to make capital out of the "gentlefolks" interest in him.

On the second occasion, in February, 1916, Lvov was invited to Rasputin's—as he puts it—at Baron J. Miklos' house, where a motley assembly was gathered together: politicians, military men, ecclesiastics, actresses, etc. Rasputin promenaded the drawing-room with D\_\_\_\_\_, the opera-singer, not arm in arm, but in a still more familiar way. He promised her his assistance as regards the Maria Theatre. Every five minutes he went up to a

small table and drained a glass of red wine.

Rasputin also walked up to Lvov, and, addressing him in familiar style, said he knew him very well, and was aware that he slandered people in his newspapers. He used the most vulgar expressions, and their conversation took a pointed turn. When Lvov said that what Rasputin said was devoid of meaning, the latter started screaming. Some of the bystanders intervened and carried off the offended "Old 'Un."

Boresov, a Russian author, has lately, in *Birzchevia Viedomosti*, given the following sketch of the "peasant from Tobolsk":

"Rasputin's outward appearance is not particularly fascinating. His countenance, with the ever-restless grey eyes, gives one a feeling of discomfort and fear. His demeanour is rude and vulgar. He speaks with an absence of refinement, and, on the whole, it seems as if he was at remarkable pains to behave as boorishly as possible. Thus, he has not yet learnt to eat with

knife and fork, but uses his fingers. Naturally he does not use a serviette either. When he has finished a meal he puts out his hands to his lady admirers, who belong to the very highest nobility, and makes them lick his fingers clean—a duty they perform with gratitude, not to say devotion. It seems that it is just this simplicity bordering on cynicism that constitutes Rasputin's greatest attraction.

" . . . Rasputin's family has always held its own in their native town for their immoral, worthless lives. According to the general opinion in the town, all the members of the family are thieves and guzzlers. . . ."

Borosov, moreover, goes on to tell us how he himself was a witness to Rasputin's arrival at his home. The monk was followed by a whole retinue, among whom was also the powerful Countess Ignatiev. Rasputin made straightway for the Telegraph Office, whence he despatched several telegrams. First he orders Baron Z—— to write a despatch to the Steamship Office

at Omsk, inquiring as to the route of a ship. When the Baron began, "I respectfully take the liberty of——" Rasputin corrected him, ordering him to write in a more peremptory tone. The telegram was then signed mere "Grigori."

"Write now," said Rasputin, "to Bishop Varnarva of Tobolsk, and ask him if the priest B—— has been nominated Superintendent at O——."

That telegram was also sent.

"And now my little Countess," said he, "it's your turn to write"; and Countess Ignatiev wrote:

"Kisses your hands, safe arrival.—COUNTESS I."

Borosov implies that this telegram was to the Tsarina.

After sending the telegram, Countess Ignatiev and the other ladies who were following approached Rasputin, and put their hands on his shoulders. Rasputin stroked them over his hair, pressed them to him, and said: "I bless you, dear children."

All this took place in the presence of

Rasputin's own daughters and a great multitude of people.

This, in connection with that account of a visit to Pokroskoye, is of interest inasmuch as it shows that even here, where his past was of public notoriety, and it was common knowledge he had undergone punishment, and people had witnessed his religio-sensual orgies—even here in a petty town where so much less happens than in big towns, and where, for that reason, this little is without difficulty remembered—when he came to the town as a man of mark and influence, he was the object of both private and official idolatry. It seems incredible. There were lines of police drawn up in his honour at the railway station, the highest officials mustered to pay their court to him, the Superintendent of the Police even rode at the head of the procession in his carriage when Rasputin drove through the streets. From all the ecclesiastical institutions for leagues round came deputations, and the clergy themselves paid him homage. All this little far-away

town was afoot. The prophet was so truly honoured—or was it feared?—in his native town!

*Russiskiye Viedomosti*, after the murder was known, wrote as follows:

“The man of whom so much has been talked of late, and in whom people saw the first weapon of ‘the dark powers,’ even if not always its source—this man is slain. He fell, not by the act of a Revolutionary, but by the hands of persons who stand on the highest grades of Society.

“In all this weird and obscure affair lies the most striking—we may openly say it—the most humiliating offence to our political and national dignity: the sharp contrast between the murdered man’s insignificance and character on the one hand, and, on the other, the unprecedented impression that the news of his death made all over Russia. Future historians will pause with amazement at the fact that, in the period of the Great War when thousands of noble lives were sacrificed for the Mother Country, the whole attention of

Russia was taken up by the question as to whether a person was dead or alive who, under normal political conditions, would certainly have ended his days quietly and peaceably in the same obscurity as that in which he began his life down there in that secluded Siberian town. And the worst of it is that this powerful and unique impression produced by the murder in Petrograd is not the outcome of an accident, a mistake, or a shifting of perspective. The impression has its cause and justification in the actual connection of things. Under conditions that prevail with us, the drama in Petrograd comes to be, not a sensational romance, but an event of real significance."

The newspaper *Dien* writes in the same strain at the time when the murder was announced:

"Grigori Rasputin was a personage about whom, as is well known, there has been a deal of talk in Russia and the whole of Europe during the last few years. The influence popularly ascribed to him has

tempted more than one who know Russia to profound reflections. Under the circumstances created by the World-War, his name has not, however, been much mentioned in the daily Press. . . .

"The extent of Rasputin's influence on our Russian life of to-day cannot possibly be described at the present moment. Undoubtedly his influence has been amazingly great, particularly in the ecclesiastical sphere. A certain explanation of Rasputin's rise in society is afforded by the company with which he used to surround himself, more particularly when travelling. All—wives (! ! !), daughters, and 'Sisters' belonging to the most fashionable society used to call him 'Father.' "

*Retsch* writes:

"There are persons with whom he has had features in common, but he distinguished himself from them all by his stubbornness and impudent interference in all affairs of State. He applied by his letters—despite his being well aware that he was hardly able to write—to acquaintances,

strangers, Ministers of the Government, and bank directors. He took it upon himself to forward petitions in all possible concerns, and he let nothing stand in the way of his carrying through what he had set his mind on. His influence steadily increased. Persons of high standing sought his favour. It is often asserted that Protopopov visited him daily; but the latter was by no means the only one. People had recourse to him on all and every occasion. There was nothing that might not be asked of him.\*

This circumstance is perhaps the saddest. Rasputin found many kindred spirits, and a grateful *milieu* to work upon. That he should end his days as he did was not diffi-

\* Von Zanka makes Syuvalova, the *prima ballerina* at the Imperial Ballet, go to Rasputin on an important business of certain members of the War Party. She was to befool the woman-tamer. Of course, it was the other way about. She became one of his most devoted followers, and she quotes a passage in conversation with Von Zanka as follows, which is characteristic :

"One can ask him for everything except money. He never gives anyone alms. He pretends that he does not possess money."

cult to foresee. But the importance lies in the fact that it was not so much Rasputin himself, but this *milieu* he had created, which made it possible for him to play such an unique part that in all resolutions of late, people were constrained to speak of the influence of the "dark powers."

In the *Kolokol* newspaper, among other matters, there occurs the following lines affording a slight impression of the significance attached to the murder incident, bearing in mind that this organ stood in close touch with Rasputin:

"Antichrist has descended to earth, and signs and deeds of the grueſomest kind are about to begin openly in Russia."

In every assembly of the Duma Rasputin has been attacked, not by any single party, but by members of eight out of the nine parties in the Duma: only the sole representative of the Reactionaries—viz., Markov II.—said nothing. As *Sovr. Slov* observes, Rasputin has even been attacked, and not the least fiercely, in the Third—the "Benevolent"—Duma of 1912.

## RUSSIAN OPINION ON RASPUTIN 81

In the beginning of 1912, as many times previously and afterwards, it was forbidden to mention Rasputin in the Press. At that time the Octobrists in the Duma presented an Interpellation. Both Lvov and Gutschkov—leaders of the Octobrists and constant opponents of the monk—made striking speeches on January 25, against Rasputin—speeches that, for the moment, were strongly effective in arousing ire, but which, for all that, in other respects, did not lead to any result.

"Who is that very strange individual," uttered Lvov, "who is exempted from the general law that applies to the Press and who is placed on an unapproachable pedestal of his own?"

And Gutschkov said:

"We are living in gloomy and sorrowful days. The conscience of the people is stirred from its depths. Dark spectres from the Middle Ages have arisen among us. It is not well with our country. Danger threatens our people's sanctuaries. . . ."

On March 22, 1912, Gutschkov made

a fresh speech, as typically Russian in its solemn power as the previous one. He said:

"All know what a dark drama is being enacted in Russia. With pangs at heart, and horror in our minds, we anticipate all its stages, and in the middle act stands an enigmatical tragi-comic figure—a sort of ghost from another world or a survivor from the gloom of centuries, a weird shape in the light of the twentieth century. Perhaps a fantastic sectarian who accomplishes his dark deeds; perhaps a strolling tramp who is carrying on his uncanny affairs. By what means has this creature gained a central position and obtained an influence to which the highest dignitaries of Church and State bow?

"If we had before us but a solitary phenomenon, the offshoot of a religious investigation, the morbid earthy sediment of an extravagant mysticism, we could stand against this thing, quietly and sorrowfully, with bowed heads as at the couch of one sick unto death. We would then perhaps weep and pray, but not talk.

## RUSSIAN OPINION ON RASPUTIN 83

But he is not alone. Is there not standing behind his back a whole crowd, a motley company worshipping both him and his sorcery? Unnoticed individuals greedy for distinction, bewailing the power that is slipping out of their hands, obscure tradespeople, shipwrecked pressmen, contractors. . . . It is they who prompt him to that which he transmits in whispers. That is the whole machinery of the business which is thus driven by its motive power accurately and neatly.

"And confronted by this phenomenon, it is our duty to shout words of warning: 'The Church is in danger, and the State, too, is in danger.' No Revolutionaries or Anti-Clerical propaganda could succeed in doing that which is achieved by the events of late."

On March 4, 1914, Miliukov concluded a speech in the Duma with these words:

"The Church is in the hands of the hierarchy. The hierarchy is the State's prisoner, and the State is dominated by a common tramp."

Prince Mansirev said in the Duma on May 12, 1914:

"The Illiodor adventure at Court miscarried, but in Illiodor's place has jumped up another man who has already been mentioned more than once here, whose name is associated with exhibitions of the lowest vices, the vilest schemes, and the demoralization of the whole of Society. It is inexpedient to mention his name; but it is known everywhere. People enter into combination with him in order to gain sympathy in the highest circles. Through him or by him are terrorized all who venture to utter their thoughts on any domain opposed to the prevailing tendency of the Orthodox Church and the leading cultured circles. This individual on his arrival at the railway station at Petrograd is made the subject of a ceremonious reception by the highest ecclesiastical authorities. This same individual is all but worshipped by our unhappy nymphomaniacs — society women of the highest class. To satisfy their lowest instincts, this individual sits

like a King on his throne in the very centre of Russia, and thence spreads over the whole country his dirty, demoralizing influence."

On the same day, moreover, when the question of the Synod's budget came up for discussion, Gutschkov again spoke about Rasputin, whereupon the priest Filopenko, an adherent of the Centre Party, said:

"As a loving and faithful son of my mother the Orthodox Church, with great grief I consider it to be my bounden duty to mention what so many speakers have previously touched on from this tribune—that which is the talk of every street corner, every public-house in our vast country. We are forced to bear witness against this inexplicable, amazing, and wide-spreading influence which certain rogues of the Jesuit type have obtained here."

Afterwards it was particularly the Extreme Conservative Purischkevitsch who directed sharp and often petulant attacks on Rasputin.

When the Synod's Budget came to be

discussed in March, 1916, shortly after Chvostov, the Home Secretary (as is related later on), hit upon an attempt to eradicate Rasputin, Purischkevitsch declared:

“The atmosphere here is intolerable. I’m off to the Front: only there can I breathe again. Is it one of Ponson de Terrail’s novels that some slanderer has told us, or is it the truth? Is our poor country to be brought to ruin thus? Is it by men such as he that we are to be destroyed?”

On November 14, 1916, Professor Miliukov\* made the great speech in the Duma that we have just referred to, which aroused such a sensation.

Beside the speech already quoted, there is ground to quote, in order to state the case fully, a few lines more, in which Miliukov—besides pointing at Stürmer, Pitrin, Manuilov, and many others—also aims straight at Rasputin:

“Gentlemen, I am truly reluctant to

\* Professor P. N. Miliukov, leader of the Cadet Party—*i.e.*, the Constitutional Democrats.

increase the—perhaps morbid—suspicion with which the heated feelings of Russian patriots respond to all that is done around them; but how will people be able to disprove such a suspicion when a little herd of obscure creatures can utilize the most weighty affairs of the State to their base personal profit? . . .”

Shulgia, the leader of the Conservative Nationalists, spoke shortly afterwards in full support of this (it is the charges mentioned in the foregoing against Stürmer and Rasputin that are referred to in the following sentences):

“In this fight (particularly against various ex-members of the Cabinet who are regarded as traitors, and one feels convinced one is right about it) the nation is fighting against a dark power that hangs like an incubus over our country. That it could be said that the Home Secretary’s secretary has divided with another a sum he had received secretly is simply appalling. The painful silence in which these assertions were received could, I suppose, only

imply the fear that such charges are true."

Moreover, in December, 1916, Prince A. D. Golitzin (who is not to be confused with his relative, the Reactionary Prince D. P. Golitzin, who was still—February 15, 1917—the Acting Home Secretary), who, was, I suppose, almost, if not quite, one of Rasputin's tools, in consequence of Trepov's—at that time Home Secretary—public declaration, said, among other things, that he disbelieved in the possibility of coalition between this Government and the community. He laid stress on the unfortunate circumstances that all too frequently of late years had asserted themselves in the Russian Ministries. He likewise went on to say—and thereby showed clearly what was a very essential thing—viz., that he entertained these suspicions.

"Has Trepov guarantees against the disintegrating operations which are carried on by the dark forces behind the scenes of the Ministry, and which, to the national disgrace, are incarnated in the persons

mentioned from the rostrum of the Imperial Duma in so brilliant a speech (Miliukov's). It is not the external foe we fear, but the decay from within and its consequences. It is the unavoidable complications and the disintegration of the State's authority that constitute the enemy's allies."

But all these attacks failed.

Words did not kill Rasputin. With whatever might they were uttered, they were nevertheless too weak a weapon. The sword of the word failed to slay him.

A revolver was to do that, and it was only when Purischkevitsch gave up speaking continually against Rasputin, but pointed the revolver at him, that the world was rid of him.

## CHAPTER IV

### PREVIOUS ATTEMPTS TO MURDER RASPUTIN

TIME after time, however, this human animal has been the subject of attempts on his life. Russia's best men were behind them all. They felt his existence and influence as a burning shame, an infamous degradation.

Up to now the plots had so far failed that he was not even wounded.

There is mention of many attempts at his murder and of planned attacks, but we shall speak of only a few of the most notorious ones, and describe at length, in addition to the plot which led to his death, only the last attack but one on him. This ended in a political scandal of enormous magnitude even as things go in Russia.

Guseva—a politician prominent in many respects—tried, in 1913, simply to shoot him, but missed.

Not long afterwards some noblemen plotted with the same object. One of the best-known aristocrats undertook the meritorious task of shooting down "Grischka." All the plans were laid. They arranged that the scene of the murder was to be a merry drinking-bout at his favourite café, "Villa Rodé," which had afforded room for so many of his wildest orgies. This murder, however, was never attempted.

Very shortly before the World-War broke out, viz., in July, 1914, a circle of nobles and Liberals—some say that it was the party bent on the war that seemed imminent—had laid plans afresh. It was to come off as naturally and simply as possible. A woman of the people was to be the one to shoot him dead. The people—from whom he had sprung, but whom he had tortured and misgoverned in many ways, not the least of which was by the appointment of incapable and criminal officials—to whom he never paid the slightest consideration in his selfish strides to power and whom he had scorned in all his

dealings—this simple folk, these common people, should rise for vengeance in the person of this woman.

She sought audience with Rasputin, and was admitted. Then she stood before him, drew a dagger, and, in blind fury, drove it into his chest.

The dagger, however, first struck a picture of the Blessed Virgin, and that mitigated the violence of the thrust—a fact that was, of course, utilized to its fullest extent by his friends to prove how God, Whose spirit was in this man, had also held His hand over him, and protected him. The dagger certainly penetrated his chest, and the wound was a somewhat serious one; but it only confined him to his bed for a few months—even if a Petrograd telegram announced that he was dead. The telegram was, I venture to say, the outcome of the undoubtedly fervent wishes entertained from many quarters that such was the case.

But, again, the attack only furnished him with a fresh opportunity to consolidate

the power he possessed, and, by the light of publicity, to bask in the rich sun of favour. It was announced in all the newspapers that people from the Tsar's palace anxiously inquired day after day about the illness, and that he, among many other similar telegrams, had received a despatch from the Tsar and Tsarina, in which they said:

“We are very anxious, and are praying for your restoration to health.”

It was reported, moreover, that the suite of rooms Rasputin had at his disposal in Tsarkoye Selo, the favourite palace of the Emperor and his Consort, had been thoroughly redecorated during his illness.

While Rasputin was in the South, to which, as soon as he was sufficiently recovered, he was brought in order to recruit his health in peace and quiet, the World-War broke out. Many have gone so far as to declare that had not Rasputin been away just then, there would never have been a war. Perhaps the only good thing he ever did was his efforts to preserve

peace, but I suppose that not even that flower will be allowed to rest unsmirched on his (after the Russian fashion) glittering coffin. Certain it is that behind his efforts to preserve peace lay personal motives—if no other, in any case, purely monetary interests, which he felt would be jeopardized by a war.

It is likewise asserted that the Grand Duke Nicholai Nicolaievitsch, who is said to have originally worked to get Rasputin to Court, later on cannoned violently against him, and was also privy to the plot that aimed at this man's death. After Rasputin's death it was hinted that, maybe, the monk might, in return, not have been quite guiltless in having, in September, 1915, caused the Grand Duke's resignation of the post of Commander-in-Chief of the Army, when he was banished to the Caucasus. Rasputin was not the man to forget or forgive.

In the beginning of 1916, however, the most serious attempt was made on Rasputin's life—an attempt of which the instigator

was A. N. Chvostov, the Home Secretary, who lost his portfolio in the scandalous trial resulting from the conspiracy.

This trial is so peculiar, and lays bare the skeleton of Russian corruption to such an extent, that we shall describe it rather fully, and there is also at hand a whole series of details concerning it. This we may get mainly through the report of the case which *Russiskiye Viedomosti* (*Russian Gazette*) at that time published, and which will be reproduced here in a very curtailed form—based on a translation in the *Social-Demokrat* of March 30, 1916.

First, however, a few observations to show its bearings.

The chief culprit in this attempt—Home Secretary Chvostov—was, as far as politics are concerned, quite at one with Rasputin. Both of them belonged to the most violently Reactionary Party. Therefore it was not political disagreement that made Chvostov desirous of getting Rasputin out of the way. It was on purely personal grounds: the chief, it is pretty clear, was quite simply a

lust for power. Chvostov and Rasputin had, in their time, been very intimate, but both were ambitious, and now stood in each other's way.

When Goremikin (February 2, 1916) was overthrown on the question of summoning the Duma and by expressing mistrust of the Duma, his successor, who was up to then unknown as a politician—the Liberal Ex-Governor B. W. Stürmer—got Chvostov appointed as Home Secretary in Goremikin's place, and retained him.

Chvostov had now a fine chance of following Rasputin's activity at close quarters, inasmuch as Stürmer was closely identified with the monk, who, in Stürmer's time, was, no doubt, the real head of the Ministry in a very substantial measure. Stürmer had been provoked by Rasputin, so that it was also only natural that he got his reward.

At the beginning of Stürmer's days of office, there was a number of ferocious attacks launched in the Duma against both the Premier and "certain persons," against

the "dark powers" that were tracked everywhere. The Opposition did not, at that period, venture actually to name, in their attack, the person they were aiming at. Stürmer retained, to be sure, in his hands means which made him feared. But the attacks went on, and they were always, in a remarkable degree, supported by accurate information about actual events and facts. This was not so strange, since Chvostov stood behind the attacks and could communicate in many things into which he had been initiated as one who occupied an official position, in close proximity to Stürmer, if not to Rasputin.

Later on, when the conspiracy we are about to describe came to light, this matter, too, was dealt with, and then there were again attacks fierce and indiscreet—both against Stürmer, who stood behind Rasputin, and against Chvostov, who had tried to make away with him.

Previous to this, the monkish priest Illiodor is several times mentioned, who at one time had played a foremost part at

Court, but who was banished later on, when Rasputin began to fear his rivalry in the Imperial favour, and intrigued to get him removed,

It is also mentioned that he who had originally been a great admirer of Rasputin, afterwards, when the latter had tripped him up, went over to his opponents, and there set to work most energetically. For a long time there was waged a hot but certainly not open war between Rasputin and Illiodor. It ended with Rasputin's triumph. Illiodor was condemned to confinement in a monastery for some trumped-up or, possibly, real cause—what particular kind was not taken too scrupulously into account where Rasputin was concerned. Illiodor escaped, however, from the imprisonment intended for him, and fled to Christiania, whence he carried on operations. He had a great deal to do with this affair.

He dwelt in Christiania till quite late in the summer of 1916. Then, it seems, he went to America. During his stay in

Christiania he was interviewed by the *Aftenpost* about this scandalous trial, and his statements to this newspaper agree very closely with the *Russkiye Vedomosti's* report of the case.

On February 17 Heine, a civil engineer, addressed himself to Simanovitsch, a drawing-room politician. This latter was intimate with Rasputin, and that was why Heine approached him. He could not go to Rasputin, as he did not know him. And the reason of this application was of the greatest importance to Rasputin, inasmuch as it turned on nothing less than a plot against the latter's life.

Heine's account of the conspiracy runs as follows:

Rzevski, a person well known in Nischni-Novgorod, had been, for some time, connected with Chvostov, the Home Secretary, and had been placed in an official position at the house of the latter's factotum. This Rzevski had obtained permission from Chvostov himself to institute a Press Club in Petrograd, and Rzevski had invited

Heine to co-operate with him in establishing this club, because he was an expert in the matter of clubs. On this Heine and Rzevski became intimate, and Heine took up his abode in Rzevski's home, where the latter lived with his mistress, who passed for his wife. Well, so familiar did he become with these people, that one day he was witness to a violent quarrel between Rzevski and her, which ended with Rzevski knocking her down. Afterwards she threatened to hand him over to the police. He worried her to desist from ruining him. Heine made peace between the pair, and then arose a very confidential relationship between him (Heine) and "Madame Rzevski," and thus she told him that Chvostov, the Home Secretary, had charged her "husband" to organize a conspiracy that had for its object the putting of Rasputin out of the way. That was the plot Rzevski entered into—and, shortly afterwards, he and his mistress went to Christiania. There the former was to treat with the fugitive Illiodor, who was to be the

prime agent in the murder business. Rzevski had the woman continually present at the negotiations, and she naturally went to Heine immediately after her return to Petrograd, and told everything! Illiodor had promised to go himself, and to get five fanatics to travel from Tzaritzen to Petrograd to commit the murder. For that Chvostov was to pay Illiodor 60,000 roubles, and Illiodor gave a declaration in writing that for this sum he would take measures to put Rasputin out of the way.

Telegraphic communications were arranged between Rzevski and Illiodor—"Madame Rzevski" kept Heine informed of everything and various telegrams came—e.g., "The brethren have been exhorted"; "The brethren have agreed"; "The brethren have arrived."

When Heine had given Simanovitsch this report, they went together to Rasputin, and repeated it, and one of Rasputin's lady friends—a lady-in-waiting of the Tsarina's—was invited, and likewise heard the story.

Next day Rasputin got a visit from the

Chief of the Okhrana, Kommissarrov, also Colonel of the Gendarmes, who informed Rasputin that the Secret Police, who had hitherto kept a close watch on him by a large number of agents, of whom a number were always following him, could no longer undertake to protect him.

This information becomes still more interesting when it is explained that it was Chvostov who, in his capacity of Home Secretary, was the Colonel Extraordinary of the Secret Police.

Then Rasputin wrote a letter—likely enough to his friend Stürmer, the Premier—and this letter ordered Simanovitsch to bring it to the lady, who, in her turn, was to hand it over to the person for whom it was intended. And on that very same evening this lady must have rung up Rasputin and—most probably with Stürmer's help—have charged Rasputin to leave Petrograd as quickly as possible. Rasputin, however, refused to do so.

On the contrary, he put himself in communication with a Military Court, and

requested it to take action. It was done with Stürmer's approval, and the knowledge of the other Ministers, including Chvostov. The last-named, on the strength of this knowledge, immediately rang up Rzevski, and warned him of domiciliary visits, and charged him to remove everything concerned with the conspiracy. The domiciliary visit was officially undertaken on the ground of "a charge of unlawful proceedings with lint from the Red Cross."<sup>\*</sup>

\* This accusation was, of course, on this occasion merely a pretext. Behind it, however, lies a curious series of real occurrence that had actually taken place. Manuilov had, as Stürmer's Secretary, been co-operating in the purchase of a large shipment of bandage material to the army and the Red Cross. It was concerned with a purchase of several million roubles, and it was mainly concluded in Germany.

Scarcely, however, had the shipment reached Petrograd and been warehoused than Manuilov became convinced that it was superfluous to have all this bandage material lying idle. There was no war on. So he travelled to Germany and got the vendors to take it back at a price which, possibly, was officially reported as about a third of that at which it was originally sold—in reality, most likely, something more; but the Treasury accountants, as a matter of course, know only the official sum.

So Rzevski made his arrangements while Heine was with him. He burned his correspondence with Illiodor; only the statement from Illiodor of the latter's willingness to arrange for the murder he sealed up and handed over to the Superintendent of the Press Club for safe-keeping. And Rzevski made still further arrangements. He perceived the possibility of being arrested himself, and, on that account, wrote two letters. And just as all the rest were playing a double game, he, too, did the same then. The first letter was to Chvostov, whom Rzevski ordered to get himself out of the scrape as best he might. This letter Heine was to give Chvostov the day after his arrest.

The second letter was to Rasputin. Heine was to give this four days after his arrest; if that had shown what Rzevski foresaw—that Chvostov's influence did not suffice. In this letter to Rasputin Rzevski described the whole state of the case. He had now nothing more to expect of Chvostov. "You might as well denounce him!"

Well, Rzevski was arrested at the domiciliary visit. The correspondence was gone, the statement also; but they found an unpresented cheque for 60,000 roubles on the Treasury. Likewise five revolvers were found, which clearly were to have been used by the five murderers whom Illidor was expected to send.

The letter to Chvostov was delivered, but it proved ineffectual, whereupon Heine delivered the letter to Rasputin, who had it sent on to the Military Court at the very time he ordered Stürmer to extricate himself from the affair. A series of meetings and conferences were held in which Manussevitsch-Manuilov took part, and where he explained before Simanovitsch that he was to carry on the affair.

Afterwards there was a meeting at the house of the mistress of Manussevitsch-Manuilov, who was acting as Secretary of the Metropolitan Pitrim (the Metropolitan was a warm supporter of Rasputin). Then Heine explained that Rzevski's "wife," after his arrest, had begged to get the letter

which Rzevski had written to Rasputin. An official from the Home Office had asked her to get it.

Manussevitsch-Manuilov then managed at the Press Club to get hold of Illiodor's complete declaration in evidence; and when Simanovitsch returned home after that evening was over, there had been a domiciliary visit to his place by the Secret Police (probably after Chvostov's orders. He, on an arrest, was anxious to try to exculpate Simanovitsch).

Simanovitsch was also arrested that night—the night between February 22 and 23. He was interrogated several times, and was not released till March 10—by the influence of Stürmer, who had, however, got himself out of the affair.

The Secret Police, however, sentenced Simanovitsch (when Chvostov was absolutely resolved on getting rid of him) to two years' exile—a sentence which Manussevitsch-Manuilov quashed on the following day (March 13) at Stürmer's instance.

But Chvostov then, in all secrecy, got

the Okhrana to order Simanovitsch to a distant place—Tver, which lies on the Petrograd-Kiev line of railway—from which, however, not long afterwards, he was allowed to return.

Then it came to pass that Chvostov, the Home Secretary, constrained by Stürmer, who had certainly been pressed by the Tsar and Rasputin, returned on March 18. Partly owing to attacks in the Duma, partly through this scandalous trial, he was so badly compromised that it would have been mad on his part to remain in Russia. Rzevski was at the same time banished for three years.

And Rasputin gained a new victory on the top of his earlier one—a victory over a conspiracy that was characteristic of Rasputin's Russia.

## CHAPTER V

### THE MURDER

As a matter of fact, the accounts current as to how Rasputin's murder was effected differ widely. This may perhaps suggest, and it is discussed by those who assert the correctness of the version that simply denies, that Rasputin was murdered. It is alleged that he is only once again exiled from Court and especially from Petrograd. And this because his merits were of such a nature that even those who were otherwise his intimate friends—perhaps those in particular—found it advisable that, for some time, his name should not be heard.

But it is scarcely possible that this time there should be another trick of this kind played. A number of details supplied seem certainly to establish the fact that he is no longer alive, and also the great number of

significant events that the reputed murder brought in its train show the utter impossibility of any mistake, and that we may now treat the opinion that he is still living as an absolute absurdity—just merely the dust from the sensational atmosphere that settled about Rasputin, and which, moreover, did not disperse even after the hot-blooded monk had become a cold corpse. Rumour has far too often reported his death whilst he was alive not to restore him to life when he was dead. Years will pass away ere Rasputin finds peace in the grave into which he was lowered under so pompous a display and so many tokens of respect.

Even if the reports vary, yet there is nevertheless a certain homogeneousness, certainly fundamental points on which we can seize that recur in them and make it possible in a way to reconstruct the events of the night in which the murder was committed. And even if the incidents in connection with a man's murder cannot generally be said to have anything in common with the man's

individuality, nevertheless, in this case, it is otherwise. The intrigues that led to the murder, all of this sort, the numerous accessories that stood in connection with it—all this is peculiar to Rasputin's environment, and, therefore, this statement is correct in depicting this man and his life.

The last session of the Duma before the Christmas vacation was held on Saturday, December 30 (according to our computation of time). It was expected that this would be a very stormy meeting. The discussions had just begun, when they were suddenly interrupted. No one mentioned on what grounds, and yet all knew what was the matter. .

In the forenoon, by Petrovsky Bridge, a corpse was discovered under the ice of the Neva. Was it a case of murder? But a murder is not wont to horrify Petrograd or the Duma. Not a soul uttered the name of the murdered man, though all knew. . . . And the news of this murder seized on everybody, excited everybody.

*Novoye Vremia* was the first newspaper to bring the tidings, which ran thus:

"MURDER ?

"The police discovered this morning near Petrovsky Bridge a male corpse floating in the Neva. The corpse bears marks of bullet-wounds."

That was the whole of it. Not a name mentioned, and yet all knew who it was. Ah, a corpse was found in the Neva !

About 10 a.m. that day a little group of well-known police officials was assembled about Petrovsky Bridge, the nearest approaches to which were closed against a large crowd by a strong force of police. There were Savadskyi, Procurator at the Court of Appeal; Sereda, Examining Judge in cases of extreme importance; Major-General Balek, Prefect of the City of Petrograd; Major-General Globutschev, Agent of the Okhrana; Kirpitschnikov, Superintendent of the Detectives; Lieutenant-General Naumov, Chief of the River Police; and Major-General Halle, Police Master of the Fourth Division.

Mingling with the high police officials present to inquire into a body found in the river was the great assemblage which was steadily increasing until it was soon black with motor-cars. They alone convinced themselves that the rumour must indeed be correct which said *he* was murdered, when the grey mists of morning lifted that hovered over the bridge.

All knew who he was.

Then they sought the corpse. The police seemed to know that it was here where it should be looked for. Finally, blood was also found on the railings of the bridge.

One of the oldest constables in the River Police, who had had much experience in salving the bodies of drowned men, came to the conclusion that the body could not have been carried far by the stream.

Searching from the boats that lay some sixty feet from the bridge, he at length observed a corpse, much disfigured, under an ice-floe. It had two wounds—one in the chest, the other in the head. The body was towed to shore and identified. The

Police Doctor inspected the corpse, and immediately, on the first hurried inspection, substantiated that the two wounds were caused by bullets. The face was disfigured; the feet were bound together by a rope; the back of the fur collar was torn.

The corpse had been standing in an upright position in the water, with both hands raised over its head, and this was the cause of its being unable to lie in the coffin that was brought down to Petrovsky Bridge. One end of the coffin had to be cut out and lengthened by several boards.

When this was done the body was driven to the Post-mortem House in the Army Academy of Medicine, and one of the leading police officials in attendance immediately conveyed to the Home Secretary, Protopopov, the news of the recovered body and the suspected murder.

This man had a double reason for claiming to get the news before anyone else, partly because he was Colonel of the Police, partly because he was very intimate with Rasputin.

Protopopov is said to have fainted when he heard the news.

At the inquest held after the murder was discovered, among other things, Rasputin's two daughters and some of the fashionable ladies who had, of late, lived in Rasputin's house were examined, and all these women agreed that young Felix Yussupov—or, as his full name and title go, Prince Felix Yussupov, Count Sumarokov Elston—had lately paid Rasputin several visits, and people had an inkling that there was an understanding between Rasputin and the Prince. Plans, too, were being laid about something or other of which Rasputin, however, had not said anything.

The daughters' evidence is the most interesting. They explained that these visits the Prince paid Rasputin were surrounded by mystery. The Prince used to come most frequently at night—as a rule, after midnight—and sometimes it was thought he had been seen in disguise. He always came by way of the kitchen entrance.

On the evening before the murder took place, Rasputin had given his servants orders to wake him directly the Prince came. About 2 a.m. a tall man is said to have come, who wanted to speak to Rasputin, and who said he had orders from Prince Yussupov, whereupon he was locked in with Rasputin, who, shortly afterwards, left the house in his company.

Other accounts, however, state that Rasputin had left at 7 p.m., for it had been said at that time a motor-car had dashed up in front of his large and elegant mansion in Gorehovaia Street. A well-dressed gentleman stepped out of the motor-car and brought a letter which he was to deliver in person to Rasputin. He only came to the anteroom, where he must have delivered the letter, which a servant took in to Rasputin, who, after reading it, remarked that he was invited out. He went out to the man waiting there, and inquired if he had driven there or had come on horseback, and the person waiting explained that he was driving, and that the motor-car was standing outside in the street.

Thus the two men drove off together—and Rasputin was never seen to return home again.

Before describing the murder itself, it is necessary, however, to explain what, in all probability, were the contents of this letter, why it came, and what, on the whole, is supposed to lie at the back of what now took place.

A few days before the memorable December 29, there had been, as reported, a very violent attack directed against Rasputin—a thing that happened very frequently. If the attack on this occasion made a tremendous stir, it was because it was confidently reported that this attack was the signal for a fresh and serious attempt to get rid of Rasputin.

We have already mentioned what Purischkevitsch said on this occasion, and he did, too, among other things, one which excited immense surprise, because it was seldom done—he bluntly mentioned Rasputin by his name.

While Rasputin, as a rule, took no notice

of attacks on himself, he must have felt very much upset by this speech, and he mentioned to some of the ladies who temporarily composed his erotic body-guard that he would highly appreciate making Purischkevitsch's acquaintance in order to try to win him over to him. That, you know, was Rasputin's ordinary method of going to work, and it was, thanks to these tactics, that he contrived to keep his position, although the attacks on him were, in an incredible degree, compromising. He used to try to get into touch with his opponents, and he would straightway pay them to hold their tongues. For the man who held the reins of power, it was no difficult matter to find go-betweens to crush a rebel. It did not help by fair means, but help it did, as a rule, for what Rasputin could offer in return for good treatment was not to be despised. So he could threaten; and the black camarilla that stood behind Rasputin was ready for anything, so that it was by no means necessary only to confine himself to dis-

missals, imprisonment, or exile, which Rasputin perhaps held directly in prospect.

Besides, he then wanted to make Purischkevitsch's acquaintance. The women by whom he surrounded himself, and to whom he then expressed this wish, and who regarded every wish of his as a command, tried to arrange this matter. It occurred quite naturally for them to elect to approach Prince Felix Yussupov with the matter. They knew that he and the monk had, of late, hold long conferences with each other, and they knew, too, that the Prince and Purischkevitsch were very well acquainted with each other and were frequently together.

Thereupon they betook themselves to the Prince, and the latter, without thinking, may have said "Yes" to the request of the two ladies of very exalted position to bring Rasputin and Purischkevitsch together.

And, besides, it was really the Prince's intention at that time to keep his promise—even if most assuredly he wanted to do it

in a way that might produce somewhat different result than that which the ladies and Rasputin wished and hoped for.

Quite recently certain conferences had been held between a set of men who wanted Rasputin sent right away, and among these were both the Prince and Purischkevitsch, together with, as the story goes, different representatives of the War Party, whom Rasputin would have tried to injure. It had been actually decided that steps should be taken to try to arrange a meeting between Rasputin and Purischkevitsch who likely enough had expressed his willingness to rid Russia of that noxious animal by means of a bullet. Thus ensued his attack on Rasputin in the Duma. If this was a conscious attempt to call forth the application of Rasputin's (to meet Purischkevitsch to win him over), which was its apparent result, there are nowhere any particulars of it. But, anyhow, it is certain that such a desire arose, and this admirably suited the plans of the conspirators.

It is settled that there should be a

meeting-place appointed for the interview between Rasputin and the well-known Conservative member of the Duma. The interview was to have the character of a *fête*, and it was to be held in Prince Yussupov's chateau—the "Pavilion by the Moika Canal," as it was called.

Consequently, it was this communication that Rasputin got through the letter, and this was his reason for going away with the individual who was waiting for him. It is very probable that, as he was expecting the summons, he had given orders to be wakened up if the Prince came.

According to some stories the guests assembled at "Samarcand's"—a very fashionable café in the outskirts of Petrograd, where there were a number of noblemen, and tea was drunk. This may or may not be correct, but, so far as it goes, it does not much matter. All reports, anyhow, are agreed that, later on, they went to Prince Yussupov's house, where the festivities were continued, and the murder took place.

The festivities at the Prince's are said, however, to have been extraordinarily lively. There was gathered together a number of well-known ladies, whom it was known that Rasputin highly appreciated, and to whom he paid court in his very strenuous way. Princess Radzivill, Countess Creutz, Madame von Drengelen, and Caralli, the *prima donna* of the Imperial Ballet, Moscow, are among the names mentioned.

Another story makes out that Purischkevitsch, directly Rasputin arrived on the scene, handed him a revolver and made him understand that he was to commit suicide there and then, or else he would be shot down. Rasputin is said to have taken the revolver, and pointed it at Purischkevitsch. The latter, however, was not hit, whereas Rasputin is said to have killed Yussupov's dog, which was found, on the following day, dead in the park—a circumstance that goes far to prove that this is the correct version, but which, moreover, can equally well harmonize with the reports, in all other

respects more probable, of the murder, which run as follows:

Gradually the gathering assumed the form of a wild orgy such as was generally the case when Rasputin was present. On an earlier occasion the Prince and Rasputin are said to have come into conflict through the latter having laid hands, as was his habit, on one of the women he was in company with. On that occasion Rasputin said:

"I permit myself every liberty, and I make no distinction with regard to a woman's rank."

He was drunk then, and a brawl ensued between him and one of the company present, who, when Rasputin spoke disrespectfully of various women of the very highest rank, is rumoured to have said:

"Be more careful in what you say, you damned lout of a rustic!" to which Rasputin replied:

"No danger, my friend; I shall talk as I choose."

This little exchange of remarks is said to

have occasioned a slight bout of fisticuffs, but the disagreement was smoothed over, and Rasputin is said to have honoured Princess Yussupov with his attentions in such a way that the Prince found a by no means unwelcome reason for interference.

Princess Irina (Irene) Yussupov is a daughter of Grand Duke Alexander Michailovitsch and his wife Xenia Alexandrovna, a daughter of the Empress Dowager Maria Feodrovna, the Danish Princess Dagmar.

Prince Felix Yussupov himself is a young man only a little over twenty-nine. He is a son of the richest man in Russia, the millionaire Prince Yussupov, to whose enormous fortune Felix is the only heir. And that will be no trifle, for it includes enormous estates, of which Arkangelskoye, near Moscow, is said to be the finest in Russia, because there is also erected a palace so magnificent that people believe that only imagination could picture it. It is also characteristic that this family not only possess a pleasure yacht, but a private railway train that travels as a special train

whenever the family goes on a railway journey.

Personally, both Prince Felix and the Princess Irene are said to be extraordinarily fascinating.

What took place between Rasputin and the young Princess is not actually stated, but it is suspected to have been something very serious indeed, and that, you know, does not sound improbable.

It ended in a brief altercation, after which both the Prince and Purischkevitsch drew their revolvers and shot Rasputin down. The one hit him on the temple and the other, no doubt, in the chest, according to the doctor's report after finding and examining the body. He is said to have had a shot-wound in the hip and three stabs, but where these latter came from we have no information at all. After being hit by the first shot—most probably that in the hip—Rasputin tried to run away, but the second shot hit him at the door, and he thereupon dropped down. There is said to have been several more shots, but they failed to hit

him—one of these may, however, have hit the dog, whose body was found with a bullet in its head. In any case, it was then stated that the dog was not suffering from rabies, as one of the domestics asserted, so it cannot be for that reason that it was killed.

The post-mortem on Rasputin's body and the examination of Prince Yussupov's rooms must have made it quite clear that, in any case, shots were fired by three different persons, inasmuch as the bullet found in the body and in the wall were different. Anyhow, they can be affirmed to have been of three different bores, therefore they must have been fired from different pistols. The intention to shoot down the frightened monk has thus been the best proved of all.

All the newspapers agree that the murder took place at 6 a.m. At that time Purischkevitsch must have left the Prince's château, and he is said to have shown his card then to a policeman stationed in front of the château, and said:

"A murder has taken place here. Inform the Superintendent of the Police."

Another newspaper says that at this particular time a man in uniform\* came out of the château and said to the constable:

"I am Purischkevitsch, a member of the Duma. Have you heard speak of me?"

"Yes," replied the constable.

"Are you a patriot?"

"Yes."

"Well, listen. I have murdered him."

At that same moment Prince Yussupov came out of the street door with a big packet or bundle. It was Rasputin's body which was wrapped in a cloak and which he was carrying to the motor-car waiting hard by, and into which he threw the body. Both the Prince and Purischkevitsch took their seats in the motor, and drove off—most likely to the Neva, in the waters of which, at 10 a.m. on the following day, the body was found under the ice.

\* Purischkevitsch, who could only have been home on leave from the Front, was customarily in full uniform.

The motor-car here spoken of, and which is the same as that Rasputin rode in to Yussupov's, was recognized as Purischkevitsch's.

Again, it should be mentioned that General Balck, Governor of the City of Petrograd, shortly after Rasputin's arrival at Yussupov's château, was there for the purpose of speaking to Yussupov, whom he requested to let him have access to the drawing-rooms.

"Why?" asked the Prince.

"Because a certain person was present at the party, whom he had strict orders to guard so that no accident should happen to him."

That must have been Home Secretary Protopopov, who had given orders for a watch to be kept, because he had got an inkling of the murder-plot.

Meanwhile Yussupov had refused the Prefect admission. He was refused a second time, and, after giving an order or two to the members of the Okhrana, the Secret Police who were posted outside the château,

he went straight to the Police Station. These police spies are reported to have been English private detectives, whom Rasputin himself is said to have got appointed, but who, nevertheless, were in the Prince's and Purischkevitsch's pay, so that they did not interfere at all, although they must have heard what others heard who passed by the Prince's dwelling.

But the detectives' best-paid orders were manifestly to the effect that they were to hear nothing; and, consequently, a Russian detective would hear nothing even if the whole world fell in ruins. Is it, then, surprising that they did not hear the fatal shots, even if these gave, and will give in the future, echoes over all Russia—ah, and even far beyond her boundaries !

## CHAPTER VI

### AFTER THE MURDER

THE news of Rasputin's murder aroused the greatest excitement among all. At the same time, it evoked wrath and enthusiasm—potent emotions, the strength of which was based on a certain knowledge of his profligate life and the corruption of which he was the protagonist.

All, from the tiny child to the greybeard, from the pauper to the stately nobleman, felt that something extraordinary had happened when Rasputin was murdered.

It was only the little cluster of Reactionaries who regarded the murder as a hurricane. All the rest—all the great mass of people—felt the murder just a deliverance from the storm, the first fresh breath of wind after the sweltering and stagnate oppression of the air.

What is significant in this respect is that the audience in all the theatres of Petrograd on the evening the murder was known insisted on the orchestra playing the National Anthem, and cheer after cheer resounded when its tones died away. People wanted by this to show their patriotic satisfaction at what had happened—and never thought that the “Hymn to the Tsar” was ill-chosen just on this particular occasion.

It is highly characteristic, too, that, immediately the murder was known, an anonymous donor presented 25,000 roubles to endow a fund which should bear the name of Felix Yussupov, and which should assist the branch of the Zemstvo’s Union for Nursing Wounded Soldiers.

Prince Yussupov was the hero of the day.

And the significance attributed in the foreign embassies to the murder is strongly evidenced by the innumerable cypher telegrams that were sent from Petrograd immediately after the event was known.

The small but powerful group of Reactionaries was, of course, active. A Cabi-

net Council was held instantly, and there it was determined to send Metropolitan Pitrim to the Tsar at the Headquarters at the Front to communicate to him the tidings. It was determined then also to have an investigation conducted without delay.

At the same time Protopopov said that he had already given orders that the investigation should be entrusted to the Political Police, and the conduct of the investigation should be put into the hands of Seveda. The latter was Investigating Judge in Affairs of serious importance, and had already this matter in hand. Against this both Trepov, the Premier, and Makarov, the Minister of Justice, protested. They were of opinion that this murder ought to be dealt with in quite the usual manner. They made it clear throughout, and many perhaps have even said that they found the guilty parties ought not to be punished. They should only engage not to leave Petrograd and the investigations should be suspended. There was therefore

no idea of interrogation in the presence of the parties concerned, who should only be requested to give such explanations as they could. And so it was—officially. Protopopov, however, continued to carry on his investigations in secret.

On January 1, the Tsar returned from the Front, and Protopopov immediately had some very serious conferences with him, and on January 2, one of the results of this conference was that Protopopov, who, up to then, had only been deputed Home Secretary *ad interim*, now received his official appointment. Of this Trepov, the Premier, had no knowledge before he saw it in the newspapers, and at the very same time Makarov, the Minister of Justice,—likewise without Trepov's knowledge—got his dismissal.

Now there was no doubt as to who was to be the real leader of the Government, and Trepov, together with Ignatiev, Minister of Education, and Pokrovski, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, gave in their resignation, which was, however, not

accepted—until January 8, when Prince D. P. Golitzin was nominated Premier. Dobrovolski was also appointed Minister of Justice after Makarov's departure. He immediately demanded the handing over to him of all the documents connected with the investigation.

Pokrovski, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, did not retire. And this because, so it is said, he was *persona gratissima* in London and Paris.

By this arrangement Protopopov had free play, and when the investigations, notwithstanding, went forward rapidly, they led to Prince Yussupov and Purischkevitsch being set at liberty and certainly escaping any sort of punishment. Still there might be other and stronger forces at work behind Protopopov's back. It is not known, however, who the party was that was then pulling the strings. One may venture, I think, to conclude that it was the Tsar himself, who afterwards publicly showed respect to Rasputin's memory by adopting his most steadfast

friend and most trustworthy jumping-jack. Then after having altered the whole Cabinet in accordance with Protopopov's wishes, he thought, in return, it was fit and proper to give the great mass of people the concession they desired: to stop the case and to condone the murder. In this the Tsarina Dagmar was not altogether without influence.

The motive alleged for dismissing the matter was that "the authorities engaged in the investigation had come to the conclusion that, as a matter of fact, there was no question of murder, but of homicide, and that those who killed him acted solely in self-defence."

This solution undoubtedly was an acceptable compromise for all parties, and it was the one thus chosen. It was, besides, plainly no small thing that accurate information was accessible and thus came to the knowledge of the public.

One part of the results of the investigations has already been told. Among others, moreover, the following scattered details occur:

The authorities engaged in the work of investigation have stated that, not only were there traces of blood in the park, but blood was found in the vestibule of Prince Yussupov's splendid old yellow château, which chemical analysis proves to have been human blood.

Prince Yussupov himself asserted, in his declaration before the authorities engaged in the investigation, that he was unable to give any certain evidence, as he did not know who it was who murdered Rasputin or why, and under what circumstances, the murder took place.

The chauffeur of Purischkevitsch's motor-car testified that it was this motor-car that was used both to drive "the person" to the party and the corpse to the Neva. Blood was likewise found in the motor-car.

But notwithstanding that Purischkevitsch is thus always one of the principals, yet his name was mentioned less frequently than Yussupov's. He kept himself far from the public gaze after the murder, after

which he once more returned to the Front, where he has remained ever since.

The post-mortem on the body showed that the face bore marks of a violent blow, which may, however, have been caused the moment the body was thrown into the water, and, likely enough, collided with one of the pillars of the bridge. It was, moreover, stated that the hands, too, had been bound. In all probability this rope got loose whilst the body was whirling about the Neva.

Among the evidence given before Dobrovolski, the Minister of Justice, there is also a statement from Popov, the judge at the inquest, which is exceedingly interesting. It is the effect that the murder, as described here, was, in all details, planned a week in advance.

Another version tries to prove that the cause of the murder must have been a scandal brought to light in respect of a plot in which both Yussupov, Rasputin, and Manussevitsch-Manuilov were implicated, and in which Rasputin's son-in-law P—a,

was involved. One proof that this is correct is considered evidenced by the fact that P—a committed suicide just a few days before Rasputin's murder.

On the other hand, this P—a, together with four of his companions, is said to have been imprisoned for complicity in Rasputin's murder, whilst it is, I take it, incorrect that both the former Home Secretary, Chrostov, and Lvov, a member of the Duma, were arrested.

Directly the murder was known, many of Rasputin's most intimate friends, whose consciences were not overclean, and who had only the support of Rasputin's arm to rely on, fled from Petrograd, many, doubtless, to foreign climes.

People there were looking forward to new forces at work in the country. And much certainly at that moment seemed to point to a very radical change in affairs—e.g., the newspapers were allowed to write about the murdered monk. Up to then Rasputin was taboo.

But on the very day after his death the

censorship restrictions were removed, and all the newspapers were filled with reports of him. There was nothing but Rasputin—his life, death, scandals, and intrigues. And so it was for three days. Then the Censor once more cried “Stop!” Reaction again was spreading her clammy cloak over everything.

And new men of darkness began to make their way towards the throne. Among others it is said that a Montenegrin priest, Father Mardarius, who had long been working against Rasputin, tried to take his place, directly after his death, and he is said to have been fairly on the way to getting it.

But however strong this reaction is or will be, yet it is unlikely ever again to reach the strength it attained when it had Rasputin at its head—Rasputin, who was the personification of that mediæval darkness which overspread the wheel of the Russian ship of State, making its progress impossible till the ship rolled and swung to and fro, and was borne along by the stream of chance.

It is exceedingly probable that Rasputin's murder will become the title-page of the folio in which the development of New Russia will be described—that development which has been long fermenting, at the back of which stands such important Russian figures, and whose forces are so rich in possibilities.



## INDEX

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| Alexander I., Tsar, 33                              | Fotscha, 33   |
| Alexander II., Tsar, 66-67                          | Frings, J. W., 16                                     |
| Altai Mountains, 16                                 | Golitzin, Prince D. P., 88,<br>133                    |
| Anarchists, Russian, 40, 41                         | Goremikin, 96   |
| Andrasikov, Prince, 63                              | "Grishka," meaning of, 47                             |
| Arkangelskoye, 123                                  | Guranov, Prince, 70                                   |
| Balek, Major General, 111,<br>127                   | Guseva, 90  |
| Barnabas, Bishop, 47                                | Gutschov, 81-83                                       |
| Beilis, lawsuit, 48                                 | Heine, 99, 100, 101, 104                              |
| Bhumkorsky, 53                                      | Ignatiev, Countess, 35, 38,<br>39, 74                 |
| Borosov, 72   | Iliodor, monkish priest, 47,<br>48, 97-98, 100        |
| Boschmakov, widow of, 36-37                         | John, Father, of Cronstadt,<br>35                     |
| Bridge Petrovsky, 110, 111,<br>113                  | Kasan, 29   |
| Caralli, <i>prima donna</i> , 121                   | Kiev, 29, 48  |
| Christania, 98, 99                                  | Kommissarov, 102                                      |
| Chvostov, 86, 95, 96, 97, 99,<br>103, 106, 107, 137 | Lukianov, S. M., 47                                   |
| Dagmar, Princess (Tsarina),<br>58, 123              | Lvov, L., 70-72                                       |
| Demetrides, 66-67                                   | Makarov, 131  |
| Elizabeth, Grand Duchess,<br>35, 39                 | Mansirev, Prince, 88                                  |
| Elistoy, Count Sumarskov,<br>114                    | Manussevitsch-Manuilov, 63,<br>86, 103, 105, 106, 136 |

- Marchant, F. P., 15, 47, 86  
 Mardarius, Father, 138  
 Miklo, Baron L., 71  
 Miliukov, Prof. P. N., 61, 62,  
     63, 65, 83, 86, 89  
 Missionaries, Russian, 17-18  
 Newspapers, Russian, names  
     of, 7  
 Nicolaievitsch, Grand Duke  
     Nicolas, 94  
 Nischni-Novgorod, 99  
 Okhrana, 39  
 Parischkovitsch, 65  
 Petrokovskoye, 23  
 Pitrim, Metropolitan, 63, 86,  
     106  
 Pokrovski, 123  
 Pokroskoye, 75-76  
 Portsmouth, Peace Negotia-  
     tions of, 58  
 Press Club, Petrograd, 99,  
     106  
 Protopopov, 64, 113, 114,  
     132, 133, 134  
 Purischkevitsch, 85, 89, 116,  
     117, 118, 119, 121, 124,  
     125, 126, 135, 136  
 Radzivill, Princess, 121  
 RASPUTIN, meaning of  
     name, 15; birthplace of, 15;  
     parentage of, 16-17; youth  
     of, 18-20; daughters of,  
     19, 114; as miracle-mon-  
     ger, 22-23; as preaching  
     monk, 21, 22, 23, 29;  
     character of, 28-29; reli-  
     gion of, 37; forced to quit  
     Petrograd, 46; recall of,  
     47; charged with inde-  
     cency, 49-50; influence of  
     52-53, 78-79; as pacifist,  
     59-60; outward appear-  
     ance of, 72; attempts to  
     murder, 91-92; murder of,  
     108-128  
 Rzevski, 99, 100, 101, 104,  
     105  
 Samara, 29  
 "Samarcand's," 120  
 Samarin, 45, 47  
 Samoyads, 16-18  
 "Scraps of Paper," Raspu-  
     tin's, 54-55  
 Sergius, Grand Duke, 38  
 Saveda, Judge, 133  
 Shulgia, 87  
 Siberians, 18  
 Simanovitsch, 99, 101, 102,  
     106  
*Social-Demokrat*, 95  
 Spiritism, Tsar's fondness for,  
     83-84  
 Stürmer, 63, 64, 86, 87, 96,  
     97, 107  
 Suchombinov, 62  
 Synvalova, *prima ballerina*,  
     79  
 Theofan, Bishop, 29, 30, 31,  
     35, 47  
 Tobolsk, 15, 16, 35  
 Trepov, 64, 68, 88, 131, 132

## INDEX

143

- |                                     |  |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| Tsarevitsch, 34, 42                 | Yefimovitsch, Grigori, 32,<br>but see Rasputin   |
| Tsarkoye Selo, 93                   | Yussupov, Prince Felix, 114,<br>115, 118, 120, 121-123,<br>126, 127, 130, 133, 135,<br>136 |
| Tschelniokov, 57                    | Yussupov, Princess Irina,<br>123, 124  |
| <i>Tundras</i> , 16                 |  |
| Varnarva, Bishop, 43, 44,<br>45, 74 | Zanka, von, 30-40, 79  |
| "Villa Rodé," 91                    | Zemstvos, 62 <i>et passim</i>  |
| War, Japanese, 41                   |  |
| War, World-, 59, 93                 |  |
| Witte, Count, 56                    |  |